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Maldini
acts over
Italians'
striking
problem

THE INDEPENDENT

Thursday 23 April 1998 45p No 3,592

Newspaper of the Year for photographs

Blair under siege over secret deal to accept nuclear waste from former Soviet Union



Spreading the message: Anti-nuclear demonstrators from the environmental group Greenpeace unfurl their protest banner at the gates to Downing Street yesterday. Full reports, page 2

Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

EU bungles cost £3bn a year

By Fran Abrams
Political Correspondent

WASTE and fraud are costing the European Union £3bn every year, according to a report by the European Commission. The report, which was published yesterday, says that the EU's budget is being mismanaged and that there is a need for a major overhaul of the system. The report also says that the EU's budget is being used for a wide range of purposes, including the payment of subsidies to farmers and the funding of research and development. The report also says that the EU's budget is being used for a wide range of purposes, including the payment of subsidies to farmers and the funding of research and development.

EU's £60bn annual budget. Among the errors that Sir John reports are: ■ Official flow of imports of Israeli orange juice to the EU are three times the size of Israel's orange crop. The European Commission spotted the irregularity in 1993 and asked Britain, among others, to guarantee import duties on the product. The UK refused, and has continued to do so ever since. ■ Instead of checking the age of cows slaughtered under a compensation scheme for bovine spongiform encephalopathy, abattoirs were asked to count their teeth. Cows with no

more than one pair of permanent incisors qualified for aid, but 1,700 of them turned out to be older than the 30-month limit on the £29m beef marketing payments scheme. ■ Britain failed to obey a command for pilchards to be regarded as sardines for the calculation of import duty. Although the error was made in 1976 no one noticed until 1991, and millions of pounds were never paid as a result. ■ 46,000 calves were slaughtered under a scheme to restrict veal supplies without proper checks on whether they were eligible. In United Kingdom abattoirs there were no checks to ensure that the meat was properly disposed of and it could have reached the human food chain. ■ Arable farmers were overpaid to the tune of £2.2bn because a compensation scheme failed to take account of world market price changes. ■ Tobacco subsidies cost £760m in 1996 - more than five times the market value of the crop. With aid amounting to £5,000 per hectare plus £4,000 for every job, it would be cheaper to pay income support to the growers. ■ Half a million pounds in anti-dumping duties on videos imported

from Macao to three member states, including Britain, was lost because of a three-year time-bar. ■ Car radios imported from Indonesia had invalid certificates of origin, and turned out to come from South Korea. Large sums in customs and other duties were evaded. In his own report on the EU Court of Auditors' findings, Sir John draws attention to a number of on-going schemes designed to cut fraud and waste, and says the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, chaired a discussion of the problem last month. Further discussions are to be held in May.

Britain's presidency gives the UK the opportunity to encourage remedial action, today's report concludes. Last night, John Redwood, the Conservative trade and industry spokesman, congratulated the European Court of Auditors for revealing the scale of the problem. "The British should be demanding a tightening up in the worst performing countries, as British taxpayers have to foot a big chunk of the bill. If they have mistakenly made payments that are too big, at least it is the British people getting the money. It's much worse when the

wrong payments are going to someone else," he said. The Economic Secretary to the Treasury, Helen Liddell, has already promised to push forward "an active agenda" to deal with fraud and waste in the EU. When the auditors produced their report last November, she described it as "disturbing reading". "But it is also a useful tool in the UK's fight against fraud and mismanagement in the community budget. This report highlights the good sense of the Government in making fighting fraud a key priority of our presidency," she said.

Questions raised over McCartney's death

By Andrew Buncombe

QUESTIONS over the circumstances of Linda McCartney's death were raised last night after her husband was forced to deny reports that her death had been "assisted" and it was claimed she had not died in California. In a series of extraordinary developments, Sir Paul McCartney's spokesman, Geoff Baker, first issued a statement saying "any suggestion that her death was assisted is completely and absolutely rubbish, a total nonsense". Reports that the coroner in Santa Barbara was investigating a possible "assisted death" came as it was revealed they had still not received a death certificate five days after her death from secondary cancer.

The Santa Barbara coroner Sgt Tom Nelson told a local paper: "When you can't get an answer... it does present those issues, the possibility of an assisted suicide or some other thing going on." However, after Mr Baker had issued his statement, there was another development when it was claimed Lady McCartney had actually died and been cremated 600 miles to the south-east in Tucson, Arizona, close to the McCartney ranch. "Locals in the desert city said it was an 'open secret', she was taken to Brings Crematorium and cremated in a discreet ceremony." The spokesman refused to comment, but other funeral businesses said they believed Brings had carried out the cremation at the crematorium in

cated about 30 miles from the ranch. Wolfrey Peace Chapel, in Tucson, said they had contacted the McCartney family as early as last Tuesday about funeral arrangements. A spokesman said: "We spoke to the family and Linda's hospice worker last week and she told us the family were trying to work out arrangements for Linda on the Tuesday before she passed away." "We offered our services but the family said they had already chosen one funeral home in the area." If the rock star's wife had died in Arizona it would explain the absence of a death certificate in California. After her death, Sir Paul brought his wife's ashes back to Britain where they were scattered.



Linda: The coroner is still waiting for death certificate

1990s the hottest decade in 600 years

By Charles Arthur
Science and Technology Editor

THE WORLD is hotter than it has been at any time in the past 600 years, increasing the likelihood that global warming is man-made, according to American and British scientists. An enormously detailed examination of data from tree rings, coral growth, historical evidence, polar-ice cores and long-standing records, shows that the northern hemisphere has never been warmer on average since the 1400s, according to researchers at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and the University of Arizona, Tucson. "Mean annual temperatures for three of the past eight years [1990, 1995 and 1997] are warmer than any other year since at least 1400," said Professor Michael Mann, who led

the research, which is published today in the journal *Nature*.

Commenting on the work, Philip Jones, at the Climatic Research Unit at the University of East Anglia, said: "The data shows that the most dramatic change in temperature has come in the 20th century: it's higher than in the past six centuries." Although the study does not offer a direct indication of what is causing global warming, Dr Jones said that it "rules out the probability that there were dramatic changes in those six centuries". "Greenhouse" gases such as carbon dioxide, produced by burning fossil fuels since the Industrial Revolution, are generally blamed for global warming. Such gases trap more of the Earth's heat in the atmosphere instead of letting it escape into space.

French fans cash in on World Cup phone-line chaos

By Nick Harris

AS FOOTBALL fans around Europe bombarded a single telephone number in Paris with millions of calls for extra World Cup tickets yesterday, it emerged that French supporters were still being given the chance to buy the lion's share of seats. A total of 15 million calls were made from Britain alone, as fans tried to buy some of the 130,000 seats for first- and second-round matches. However, the vast majority of the

calls did not even get routed through to France because British Telecom limited the number of lines allocated to the number in order not to overload the system and clog up lines across the Channel. The tickets, which went on sale at 7am on a first-come first-served basis, had originally been earmarked exclusively for French supporters, but were made available by the French World Cup organisers (CFO) after the European Commission advised that its restrictive sales policy contravened European

law. However, of an estimated 20 million phone calls which made it through to Paris yesterday, 75 per cent were made in France. Those routed from the 17 other European countries entitled to apply for seats amounted to just 25 per cent in total. Moreover, of the 90 operators handling the calls, 30 were dedicated to dealing with French customers, who also have an extra ticket line of their own. Professor Howard Williams, a telecommunications expert from Strathclyde University,

said the chances of any single call from the United Kingdom being successfully answered were estimated at two million to one. "It's slightly better than the National Lottery," he said. Four million calls were made to the hotline from Britain in the first hour alone, but a British Telecom spokesman said only 50,000 of them were routed to France. A CFO spokeswoman said the hotline system was "working very well", despite the fact that some callers managed to get through to the hotline queuing system, but then

found themselves cut off after a few minutes. A Football Supporters' Association spokeswoman said the hotline amounted to nothing more than a public relations exercise by the CFO. "I don't think they have any interest in getting the tickets to the fans who really want them. I don't think [the hotline] is going to make a lot of difference to most fans." The hotline will remain open from 7am to 7pm BST until week today, but will be closed on Sunday. The number is 00 33 1 49875354.

Today's news

National park plan

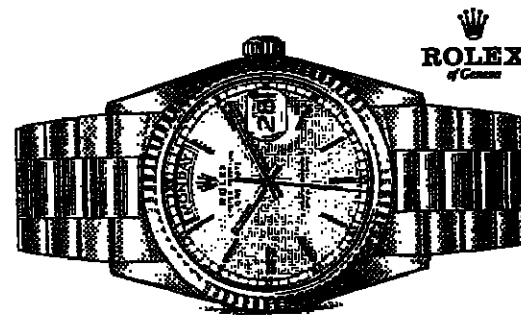
The New Forest should have national park status, says the Government's advisory body on landscape. Page 9

Tobacco ban

A ban on tobacco advertising and sponsorship throughout the EU has been backed by Brussels MEPs. Page 4



MOUTH
WATERING
OYSTERS.
(BUT NOT
FROM OUR
FOOD HALL.)



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Coen Brothers
go California
dreaming

■ Space
Monkeys:
making it in
America

■ Sliding
Doors:
bankrolling a
box office
winner



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Recycled paper made up
41.4% of the raw material for
UK newspapers in the
first half of 1997.

Concern grows among Labour MPs about secret reprocessing deal to ship uranium from Georgia, report Colin Brown and Charles Arthur

Nuclear decision excluded Cabinet

TONY BLAIR'S secret deal with President Bill Clinton for Britain to take a shipment of enriched uranium from the former Soviet republic of Georgia was approved without a meeting of the Cabinet, it emerged last night.

The deal was agreed in correspondence by members of a Cabinet sub-committee, but the Prime Minister's official spokesman confirmed that the ministerial approval was given without a meeting.

Although there was a show of support in the Commons for Britain's move, the effective rubber-stamping of the deal by Cabinet ministers will heighten the concern among some Labour MPs at the way the highly controversial secret nuclear deal was handled by the Government.

As more details of the deal - concluded in February after seven months' discussion with the United States - became public, the director of the Dounreay reprocessing plant in Scotland admitted that it will be at least two years before some of the nuclear fuel can be dealt with.

"Before we are in a position to reprocess that material we will have to make a safety case and prove to the Nuclear In-

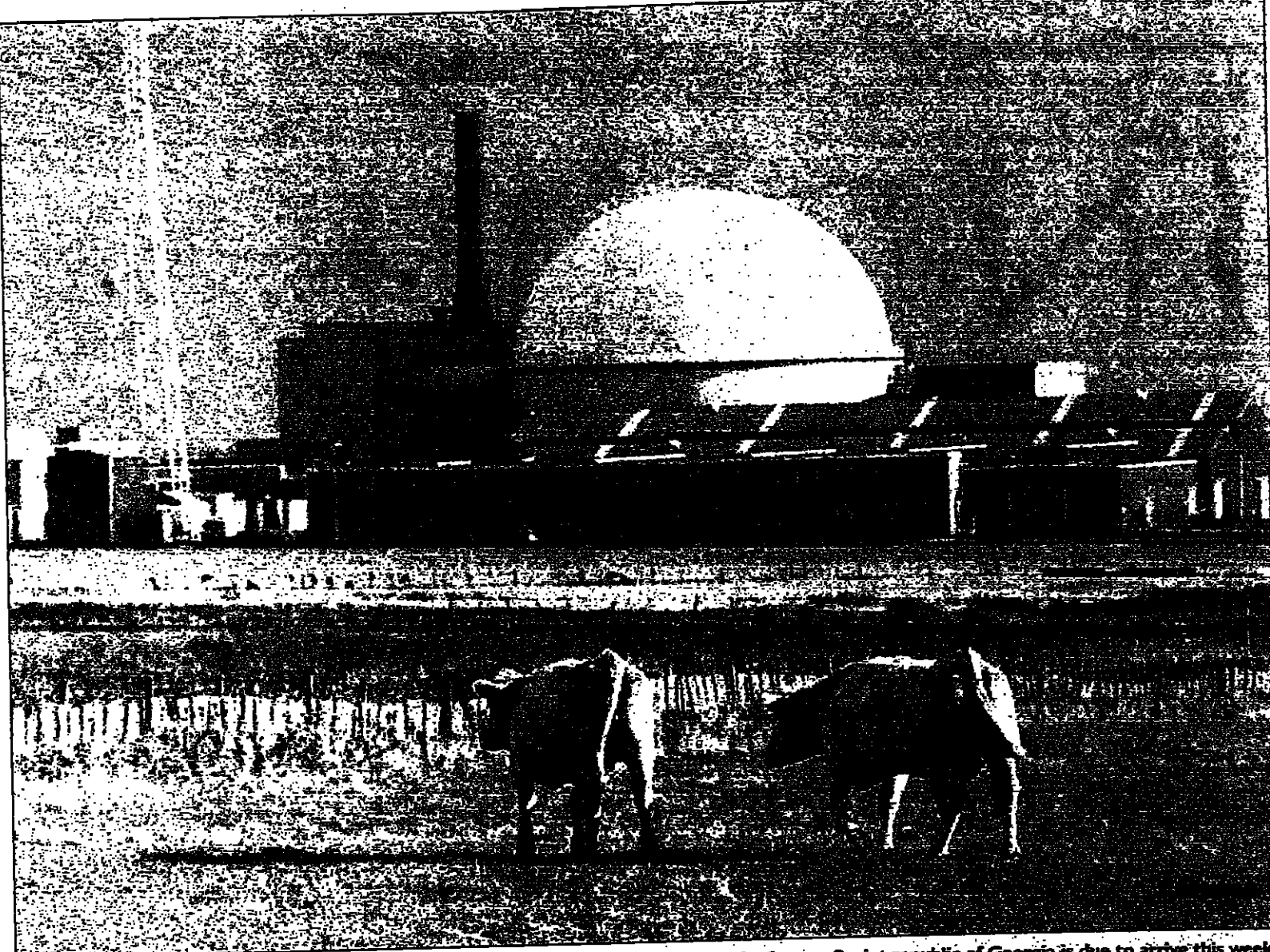
stallations Inspectorate that we are ready to go," Ray Nelson, told BBC radio.

The radioactive shipment is expected to arrive later this week at Wick Airport, about 30 miles from the plant, though government sources refused to name the date on security grounds.

Downing Street insisted that it is a "one-off" shipment, but the Government faced backbench demands for a Kyoto-style environmental summit to agree international action for dealing with the nuclear waste from the former Soviet Union.

"This is a major environmental issue facing Europe and no one is openly prepared to discuss it yet. There are 17 other nuclear power stations in East-West corridor and this could happen again. It is a nuclear nightmare staring us in the face," said Alan Simpson, a leader of the left-wing Campaign Group of Labour MPs.

Environmental protesters from Greenpeace draped a banner across the gates leading to Downing Street in protest at the decision to accept the shipment - although another campaigner, Lorraine Mann, convener of Scotland Against



The Dounreay reprocessing plant in Scotland, where the shipment of uranium from the former Soviet republic of Georgia is due to arrive this week.

Nuclear Dumping, seemed to accept the Government line.

She said: "We may not be happy about it coming here but morally we cannot say 'Ah yes, but it should go somewhere else'."

In the Commons, Tory MPs accused the Government of showing "complacency" about the widespread public concern

over the shipment. But at Question Time, Mr Blair took the lead in strongly defending the decision to take the shipment, which was first agreed with the US in July, last year, and discussed at the meeting with Mr Clinton in Washington in February.

The Prime Minister told MPs that the recycled waste

would add only two barrels to a stockpile of 14,000 barrels already in Britain. The decision was taken to avoid any threat of the uranium falling into the hands of rebels in Georgia, he said. "The US has already taken some 350kg of highly enriched uranium from Kazakhstan and Russia has taken some 137kg from Iraq

since the Gulf War," he said.

Mr Blair stressed that other European countries were making contributions to the project. "That is the reason why we thought it was important to do what we did."

Britain had followed entirely the normal rules for transportation for civil nuclear fuel, he added. Accusations of "se-

crecy" over the deal were exaggerated, he said.

The Government had already prepared its draft parliamentary reply on the matter, but was overtaken by the leaking of the story two days ago. "We will give full details the moment the transportation has occurred," Mr Blair promised.

Leading article, page 18

Deadly legacy that must be made safe

By Charles Arthur
Science and Technology Editor

THE FIVE or so kilograms of nuclear material from Georgia is the tip of what is potentially a very large iceberg. There are 36 similar "research reactors" to the one now being decommissioned by American experts, dotted all over the former Soviet Union, and making each safe will pose its own particular set of hazards.

Though diplomatic sources have for the past two days stressed their worries that the enriched uranium fuel rods might be stolen and sold or smuggled to the Middle East, the risk posed by the nuclear materials is greater to the nearby population, given the strained

financial circumstances of science in many of the republics.

Sky News yesterday showed frightening film footage of people with radiation burns from exposure to the fuel rods, which are now kept underwater - because to expose them would spray anyone in the vicinity with a lethal dose instantly. But because the storage facility is so short of funds, it is renting some of its space out as a store for fertiliser and foodstuffs.

Though a terrorist mission to steal the fuel rods is not impossible, the greatest risk they pose is to the local population. If criminals did somehow steal the rods, they would be more likely to kill themselves and pollute the immediate environment, including the

groundwater table, than get anywhere near constructing a bomb.

Nevertheless, the Georgia shipment is just the latest in a long-running diplomatic effort to "mop up" such reactors where their contents could be at risk. According to the *World Nuclear Industry Handbook*, from Nuclear Engineering International magazine, there are research reactors in Belarus (1), Georgia (2), Kazakhstan (4), Latvia (1), Russia (27), Ukraine (2) and Uzbekistan (1). They vary in size, with potential output powers varying from a few hundred watts up to 60 kilowatts. The Georgia facility, when it was open, had a theoretical output of 5 kilowatts, though it was not used for electricity production. There are many more of the

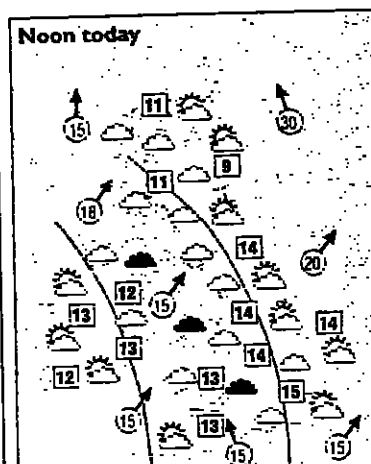
"RBMK" nuclear reactors still in use throughout the former Soviet Union, to generate electricity. In these, graphite is used to control the nuclear reaction: it was one such facility which went so disastrously wrong at Chernobyl in 1986.

The 37 research reactors, by contrast, are water-cooled, and in theory less likely to go out of control. Most are still operational: only those in Belarus and Georgia, and 7 of those in Russia, have been shut down or decommissioned.

With the costs of decommissioning too high to be borne by the local governments, the current controversy over the Georgian waste is unlikely to be the last in which countries like Britain, the US, France, Germany and Canada have to become involved.



WEATHER



The eastern half of Scotland and England will have a dry morning once any remaining overnight rain has cleared the extreme east. However, it will cloud over in the afternoon with showery rain spreading from the west. Western Scotland, Wales and all of western England will soon become cloudy with a spell of rain lasting three or four hours, but it will clear up later this afternoon. Northern Ireland will be wet this morning but will become much brighter this afternoon.

Outlook for the next few days
Tomorrow will be unsettled with another area of rain spreading from the west. The rain will be light and patchy in the south, but heavier bursts are likely in the north, although most western districts will clear up in the afternoon. On Saturday most places will have sunny spells and scattered heavy showers, but some more prolonged rain is possible in south-east England. The showery weather will persist on Sunday and Monday.

British Isles weather

Most recent available figures at noon local time
C: cloudy; CI: clear; F: fair; FG: fog; H: haze; M: mist; R: rain; S: sunny; SU: sun; SH: showers; SN: snow; TH: thunder.

Aberdeen	Dr 9 48	Exeter	Sh 13 55
Anglesey	C 13 55	Leicester	C 14 57
Armagh	C 13 55	Liverpool	C 16 61
Belfast	C 13 55	London	Sh 15 59
Birmingham	F 16 61	Manchester	Sh 15 59
Blackpool	F 14 57	Newcastle	C 13 55
Bournemouth	C 16 61	Oxford	C 17 63
Brighton	S 14 57	Plymouth	R 11 52
Bristol	R 16 61	Scarborough	C 9 48
Cardiff	C 12 54	Southampton	C 15 59
Carlisle	C 14 57	Southend	S 15 59
Dover	F 16 64	Stamford	C 11 52
Dublin	R 10 50	Stirling	C 13 55
Edinburgh	C 15 59	Torquay	C 13 55
Exeter	R 14 57		
Glasgow	C 15 59		

Air quality

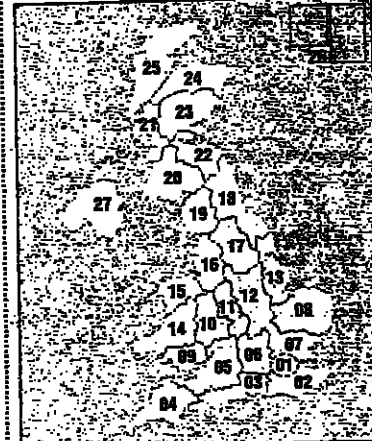
Yesterday's readings

London	Mod	Good
Wales	Mod	Good
C: England	Good	Good
N: England	Good	Good
Scotland	Good	Good
Ireland	Good	Good

Outlook for today

London	Mod	Good
S: England	Mod	Good
Wales	Good	Good
C: England	Good	Good
N: England	Good	Good
Scotland	Good	Good
Ireland	Good	Good

Out and about with AA Roadwatch
Call 0330 481777 for the latest local and national traffic news. Source: The Automobile Association. Calls charged at 50p per min at all times (inc VAT).



INDEPENDENT Weatherline

For the latest forecasts dial 0800 5009 followed by the two digits for your area indicated by the above map. Source: The Met Office. Calls charged at 50p per min at all times (inc VAT).

High tides

	AM	HT	PM	HT
London	12:02	6.6	00:25	6.6
Liverpool	09:18	8.6	21:54	8.8
Avonmouth	05:03	11.8	17:36	12.1
Hull (Albert Dock)	04:27	7.7	16:37	7.8
Greenock	10:47	3.1	23:07	3.1
Dun Laoghaire	09:43	3.8	22:25	3.9

Height measured in metres.

Lighting-up times

	20°C	10°C	05:01
London	20:20	10:51	Sun sets: 05:40
Bristol	20:20	10:57	Sun sets: 04:38
Glasgow	20:29	10:50	Moon sets: 16:10
London	20:10	10:47	
Manchester	20:24	10:50	
Newcastle	20:26	10:43	

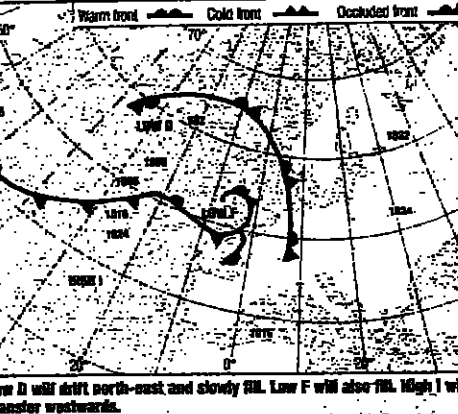
New Moon April 26

World weather

Most recent available figures at noon local time

Alexandria	12 69	Chicago	12 69	London	12 69
Algiers	12 69	Colombo	12 69	Los Angeles	12 69
Amman	12 69	Cairo	12 69	Madrid	12 69
Ankara	12 69	Calcutta	12 69	Moscow	12 69
Antwerp	12 69	Chongqing	12 69	Nairobi	12 69
Athens	12 69	Dhaka	12 69	Rangoon	12 69
Auckland	12 69	Hankow	12 69	Reykjavik	12 69
Bahia	12 69	Harbin	12 69	Rome	12 69
Baku	12 69	Hong Kong	12 69	Saint Petersburg	12 69
Bombay	12 69	Kobe	12 69	Seoul	12 69
Buenos Aires	12 69	Kuala Lumpur	12 69	Shanghai	12 69
Calcutta	12 69	La Paz	12 69	Shenyang	12 69
Cardiff	12 69	Lima	12 69	Singapore	12 69
Cebu	12 69	Lisbon	12 69	Sourabaya	12 69
Dhaka	12 69	Ljubljana	12 69	Taipei	12 69
Dublin	12 69	Lyon	12 69	Tokyo	12 69
Edinburgh	12 69	Macao	12 69	Urumchi	12 69
Exeter	12 69	Manila	12 69	Yokohama	12 69
Glasgow	12 69	Medan	12 69		
Hankow	12 69	Montevideo	12 69		
Harbin	12 69	Mumbai	12 69		
Hong Kong	12 69	Nairobi	12 69		
Kobe	12 69	Rangoon	12 69		
Kuala Lumpur	12 69	Reykjavik	12 69		
La Paz	12 69	Rome	12 69		
Lima	12 69	Saint Petersburg	12 69		
Lisbon	12 69	Seoul	12 69		
Ljubljana	12 69	Shanghai	12 69		
Lyon	12 69	Shenyang	12 69		
Macao	12 69	Singapore	12 69		
Manila	12 69	Sourabaya	12 69		
Medan	12 69	Taipei	12 69		
Montevideo	12 69	Tokyo	12 69		
Mumbai	12 69	Urumchi	12 69		
Nairobi	12 69	Yokohama	12 69		
Rangoon	12 69				
Reykjavik	12 69				
Rome	12 69				
Saint Petersburg	12 69				
Seoul	12 69				
Shanghai	12 69				
Shenyang	12 69				
Singapore	12 69				
Sourabaya	12 69				
Taipei	12 69				
Tokyo	12 69				
Urumchi	12 69				
Yokohama	12 69				

Atlantic chart, noon today

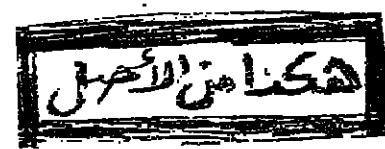


MICHAEL HANLON WEATHER WISE

CHILDREN in Britain get a raw deal when it comes to holidays. Especially the summer holidays. For a start, they get less of them. While their Continental and Irish chums as a rule get a whopping three months, from the beginning of June to the end of August, British kids have to put up with a miserly six weeks. If that wasn't bad enough, those six weeks - from the last week in July to the first week in September - are probably some of the worst weeks in the season for children on holiday, who look forward to dry, warm and sunny days off school.

November and December are, on average, the wettest months of the year, which is not unexpected. More surprisingly, August is not far behind in the rain stakes. In Edinburgh, August and July are more than twice as rainy as April and May. May is also the driest month in the Highlands (and no midgets either), while June records consistently lower rainfall than August across the whole country. September and October too, are often drier than late summer.

The figures are backed up by anecdotal evidence. Children and university students all have memories of revision and exams being undertaken in roasting classrooms in June, the school gates opening a few days later, and the heavens opening a few days after that. Similarly, the creepily timed August Bank Holiday is nearly always a wash-out, yet September is often the finest month of the year. Clearly things need to be moved. A six-week holiday running from, say, the second week in May through to the beginning of July would give children a better chance of enjoying a proper summer holiday. So would two three-week breaks - one in late May/early June, the other in September. But, like a move to permanent daylight-saving time, the idea is far too sensible to have any chance of success.



Blockade in Calais strands UK lorries

By Andrew Buncombe and John Lichfield

HUNDREDS OF British lorry drivers last night remained stranded on either side of the Channel after French seamen voted to extend indefinitely the dispute that has closed Calais.

A meeting of about 100 sailors aboard one of the four vessels in the harbour that have immobilised the port, rejected suggestions that they lift the blockade.

Last night, negotiations between SeaFrance and the CFDT union (Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail, were continuing, but a union spokesman said: "Nothing has changed at the moment and it looks as if the strike will not be over tonight."

"Management will have to give way or this strike will continue indefinitely. We are sorry that lorry drivers are stuck but this is the only way to express our grievances."

The ostensible cause of the dispute is the dismissal of a sailor, whose navigation licence was cancelled by the French authorities after he was found guilty of a criminal offence. The seamen are also demanding pay rises, better working conditions and an increase in the number of staff on board the ships.

The union says that the local dispute, which has not affected other ports, is the "drop of water" that has caused the accumulated anger from a series of other disputes to "overflow the jug".

This is of little comfort to the hundreds of British lorry drivers who for the third time in six months found themselves

caught in the middle of a dispute at Calais.

Dan Hodges, spokesman for the Road Haulage Association, said that the strike had already cost British hauliers £500,000 a day.

"The situation is totally untenable. Once again our members and their livelihoods are being placed at risk in a dispute in which they have no involvement," Mr Hodges said. "We cannot have a situation where British hauliers continue to be made the whipping boys for every individual grievance."

Geoff Dossier, of the Freight Transport Association, added: "Once again a strike by French workers has resulted in major inconvenience and financial costs to the British transport industry. For a major port like Calais, the frequency of these sort of incidents has become a farce."

This view was echoed by lorry drivers who had been stranded by the action and were yesterday evening facing another night at the port or on the M20 motorway in Kent where they queued for sailings to the Belgian ports of Ostend and Zeebrugge.

Driver Billy Giles, who owns his own lorry, said: "The French workers have their government backing them and I'm sure they will get what they want from this strike."

"What I want to see is the British government doing something about this. Every time we come to France there is a strike and we are the victims."

The strike began on Monday when the sailors seized four SeaFrance ferries and manoeuvred them in a position to block all cross-Channel ferry and freight traffic.



'I will insist when I come to Covent Garden to sing next time that the prices will be kept as low as possible': Domingo in London yesterday

Photograph: Laurie Lewis

Golden tenor sings loudly for affordable opera

THERE was an irony in Placido Domingo's statement yesterday that he would insist on prices being as low as possible next time he sings at Covent Garden, writes David Lister.

One of the many reasons that the Royal Opera has hiked up its prices in the past has been an appearance by, well, Placido Domingo. As with that of his fellow Three Tenors stars Luciano Pavarotti and Jose Carreras, Domingo's presence is enough for Covent Garden to know it can charge £275 for the best seats, capitalising on the rarity and exclusivity of a performance by the singer.

This is exactly what happened last year when Domingo, appearing in *Die Walküre*, attracted the same range of prices as a special gala evening. It is the aura of a performance by Domingo that attracts premium ticket prices, not the fees he charges, though at around £20,000 a performance, these are considerably higher than the vast majority of singers.

Yesterday Domingo was in Lon-

don to publicise an appearance with the Royal Opera, not as a singer this time but as conductor, conducting *La Traviata* in Baden Baden in June.

He took the opportunity to say that his return to Covent Garden, when it re-opens next year, would be dependent on cheaper tickets. "I will insist when I come to Covent Garden to sing next time that the prices will be kept as low as possible," he said. The 57-year-old star - who 16 months ago celebrated 25 years of working at the Royal Opera - said: "It isn't my fault, I don't make

IN THE NEWS PLACIDO DOMINGO

£1 more. It's a pity, because the public suffers. The public can't come to the opera because it is too expensive."

In fact Domingo is knocking at an increasingly open door. The new chairman of the Royal Opera House, Sir Colin Southgate, is determined to change its pricing structure. No firm

decision has yet been made, but there should be changes to the structure of last year where most performances ranged from £4 to £110 and from £13.50 to £275 for galas and Domingo or Pavarotti performances.

It is anticipated that a new structure will see the bulk of seats at a middle price of around £50 with a sizeable section of cheap seats at below £10 and £125 plus for the best seats which often go to corporate customers. It is also highly likely that when the re-opening programme is announced, Placido Domingo will be singing in the first

weeks of the renovated house. There is probably no better loved figure at Covent Garden - even if Pavarotti fans might contest that statement. Domingo's association with Covent Garden has been a more regular one than his great rival's, and his commitment to public access has meant that in the past he has argued hard for big-screen re-lays of his performances in the Covent Garden piazza.

Domingo has a repertoire of more than 90 roles compared to the two dozen of Pavarotti and gives about 70 operatic performances a year, plus about 12 concerts.

He still sees his voice as something apart from himself. "It is both separate from me and depends on me. It is my instrument but it lives with me and is affected by every little thing I do with my body," he says.

Every night he says a prayer to St Cecilia, the saint of music and St Blaise, the saint of throats. He adds: "I also makes sure that on St Blaise saint's day I make a cross with candles around my throat and make a special benediction."

DOMINGO ON WOMEN

"Women, of course I like it. I am a real man. In the music world many important positions are given to women and it is a lot more difficult to say 'No' when a smiling girl is in charge of the orchestra. You see the nice smile, a beautiful pair of eyes talking to you and everything you do happier."

ON HIS WIFE

"We spend as much time as we can together. In all the time we've been married there has not been one day that I have not been with Maria, or not called her."

ON RETIREMENT

"I will be 60 in 2001, so perhaps that is an appropriate age to stop. Perhaps 65, I don't know. If I am still in good shape and can

sing another four or five years at 60, I will. But you have to leave the people wanting, wishing for more, not saying, 'My God, is he still singing? When is he going?'"

ULTIMATE PERFORMANCE

In 1992 Placido Domingo starred in a £4 million TV performance of Puccini's *Tosca* at the times and in the Roman locations the libretto specifies.

Organist fired in row over Westminster Abbey cash

By Clare Garrner

WESTMINSTER Abbey's long-serving organist and choir-master was dismissed yesterday after an investigation into the management of money owned by the Abbey's music department. He refutes the allegations and intends to appeal directly to the Queen.

Martin Neary and his wife, Penelope, who was his assistant, were sent letters of dismissal after a meeting attended by the Abbey's Dean, the Very Rev Dr Wesley Carr, the four canons of Westminster and the Receiver-General. Dr Carr said the decision followed investigations which showed the Nearys had set up a company last April to handle choir contracts and appearances without informing the Abbey authorities.

The existence and activities of Neary Music Ltd only came to light when the Abbey auditor made inquiries about income and expenditure relating to choir tours, concerts and recordings.

A statement from Dr Carr said: "Dr and Mrs Neary took advantage of his position... to further their own financial gain, although it was possible the



Carr: Accused of being a 'tin-pot dictator'

process would deprive others (the lay vicars and chorists) of income."

The Nearys "absolutely deny" they sought to conceal the existence of the company or that they acted with any lack of honesty. Dr Neary, 58, who has been Abbey organist for the past 10 years and is president of the Royal College of Organists,

was decorated by the Queen for his musical direction at the funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales. He is entitled to - and intends to - appeal to the Queen in her capacity as the Visitor of the Abbey. Being a "royal peculiar", the Abbey does not come under the authority of the Church of England or the Bishop of London. It is understood

any such appeal would be heard on the Queen's behalf by the Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine of Lairg. Mrs Neary will be appealing to the canons.

Dr Carr has been criticised for the way he handled the dispute. Frank Field, Minister for Welfare Reform and a former member of the General Synod, has accused him of being a "bully", of setting up a "kangaroo court" and behaving like "a tin-pot dictator".

Dr Carr acknowledged that yesterday's decision was unusual. The last time any appeal was heard on behalf of the Queen following a decision by the Dean and Chapter at the Abbey was in 1949. Then it concerned a constitutional issue.

The inquiry into Neary Music Ltd found Mrs Neary was the sole director and Dr Neary the company secretary. The company was used to handle monies for the Abbey choir's Oslo tour and concerts at the Barbican and National Gallery last year. "The company was found to have paid a dividend of £1,500 to Mrs Neary and to have accumulated surpluses in the bank account for abbey events," read part of the statement from Westminster Abbey.

Father Ted's funeral provokes Catholic ire

By Alan Murdoch in Dublin

PRIESTS who conducted the funeral services for Dermot Morgan - who played Father Ted in the Channel 4 television series - were last night attacked by a Catholic magazine, which accused the actor of "antipathy towards the Church into which he was baptised".

Morgan died suddenly of a heart attack two months ago after completing the final series of *Father Ted*, the surreal comedy about three errant Irish priests banished to a remote island.

The magazine, published by the Catholic-leaning Pioneer Total Abstinence Association, complained that Morgan's send-off risked adding to "the moral confusion by which people are increasingly beset".

Father Michael Paul Gallagher, who officiated at the funeral, said it was for the benefit of the bereaved. The late comedian had been his friend for 27 years, and he accepted some of Morgan's satire was "prickly" towards clergy, a piece of understatement akin to calling thermo-nuclear war a bit warm.

himself would hardly have denied sinning.

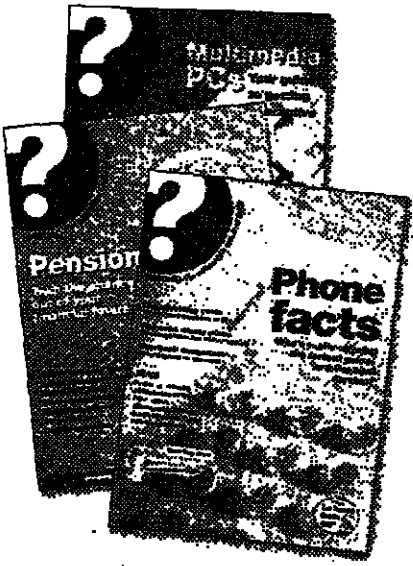
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Father Gallagher helped nurture Morgan's Craggy Island depiction of the priesthood's wilder fringes. Teaching the young comedian at University College Dublin, he lent him his dog-collar so he could terrify newly arrived first year students with an annual "welcome" address in the guise of a de-ranked senior cleric-professor.

Curiously, Morgan had once contemplated entering holy orders. He didn't, and his depiction of the Church would have been even harsher had the merciless Irish radio satire *Scrap Saturday* still been on air when clerical sex scandals began erupting in 1992.

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WHICH? THE INDEPENDENT CONSUMER GUIDE

Europe set to outlaw tobacco advertising

By Jeremy Laurence
Health Editor

A BAN on tobacco advertising and sponsorship throughout the European Union was backed overwhelmingly yesterday by a committee of MEPs.

The decision increases the likelihood that the full European Parliament will endorse the ban when it meets in the week beginning 11 May - ushering in the first Europe-wide legislation of its kind.

The ban would mean that all poster advertising for tobacco would disappear within three years, advertising in newspapers and magazines would be phased out within four years and sponsorship deals would go within five years with the exception of world-level sports such as Formula One which would be given eight years.

By 2006, no tobacco advertising would be allowed anywhere in the EU except inside tobaccoist shops and in specialist tobacco magazines.

In the UK, most advertising and sponsorship is expected to disappear by 2000 if the ban is passed. A draft law has been prepared in anticipation of the European legislation.

Yesterday's decision by the European Parliament's environment and consumer affairs committee effectively rebuffed opponents of the proposed new law who argued the ban would infringe the right to freedom of expression.

In London, a spokeswoman for the Department of Health described the decision as "a very significant step forward".

The ban was hammered out by health ministers of the member states last December, but the tobacco companies raised

a series of objections and sought to have the proposals amended in the hope that this would string out the process and cause it to fail. Last week, the European Parliament's legal affairs committee declared the measure illegal.

However, the environment committee, to which the legal affairs committee reports, rejected this interpretation and backed the new law by 37 votes to 6. Although the full parliament will have a chance to amend the measure in May, the size of the margin makes it more likely that it will be passed.

John Carlisle, of the Tobacco Manufacturers Association, said the measure was "ill conceived" and said global experience had shown that an advertising ban would be "totally ineffective" in meeting the EU's health policy aims.

Clive Bates, director of Action on Smoking and Health, described the decision as a milestone, and he added: "We are delighted. This is what we've been pushing for."

"The message we've been sending out is that this directive may not be perfect, but it's far better than anything that has gone before."

"Our big fear was that MEPs friendly to the tobacco industry would propose [wrecking] amendments... I gather 70 amendments were put down, but they were rejected."

Frank Dobson, Secretary of State for Health, welcomed the committee's decision. "This is a significant reaffirmation of the widespread support for our proposals for European-wide action to phase out tobacco advertising, with appropriate time made available for sport to find alternative sources of revenue."



Girl power: A female recruit at the Army's training centre at Pirbright, Surrey, yesterday undergoing fitness tests designed to give women a better chance of being accepted. The rigour of tests will also be matched to the jobs youngsters want - be it Paratrooper or electrician Photograph: PA

'Hysteria' warning on paedophiles

PUBLIC "hysteria" about the freed child-killer Sidney Cooke is putting children at risk, probation chiefs warned tonight.

Parents in Somerset who had stopped taking their children to school because they feared Cooke was held in a nearby police station "seem to be parting ways with rationality", said Gill Mackenzie, vice-chairman of the Association of Chief Officers of Probation.

"The public reaction is very, very understandable but the way the reaction is going now it's actually getting in the way of the best interests of children."

"Children's anxieties are being unnecessarily raised by keeping kids out of school be-

cause somebody is in police custody." On BBC2's *Newsnight* parents said they were keeping children away from school because they were worried about Cooke.

He is believed to be in either Yeovil or Bridgnorth police station, and protesters have staged demonstrations outside both. "The public will say he could walk out at any time, but I can't imagine he would and if he did the police would respond appropriately," said Ms Mackenzie, chief probation officer for Gloucestershire.

"I'm worried about the effect on children - I'm worried about the effect from paedophiles but I'm also worried

about this contrary backlash on them and all the constant anxiety that's been generated."

Ms Mackenzie added: "Public concern about protecting their children is wholly legitimate and I would like there to be more sensible discussion in the media about how parents can sensibly protect their children. But some pockets seem to be parting ways with rationality and whipping themselves up into hysteria, which can't be good for children, and can't be good for close supervision of sex offenders. There seems to be a desire in many sex offenders to run away and go underground."

She said the answer to public concern lay in continued very

close supervision of the very few dangerous sex offenders released from prison. "There's tagging, there are TV cameras, there's both human and mechanical paraphernalia."

Under last year's Sex Offenders Act paedophiles have to register with police and if they disappear, the public can be warned, Ms Mackenzie said.

She also warned about cases of mistaken identity where vigilantes had attacked elderly men in the belief they were Cooke. A recent incident in Manchester involving an old man who moved on to a housing estate caused particular concern, she said.

Cooke, 71, was released from prison on April 6 after serving nine years of a 16-year sentence for the manslaughter of teenage runaway Jason Swift.

After spending 11 days in a London police station he was transferred to Avon and Somerset police after asking to move to Bristol. The police have confirmed they are holding him while a permanent home is found for him.

Police and probation officials met yesterday in Bristol to try to decide what to do with him but no statement was expected on his future. Though technically free, he has agreed to be supervised by the probation service and to be electronically tagged.

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Jab set to spare animals the cut

By Andrew Yates

DOG and cat lovers who shudder at the thought of having to take their four-legged companions to the vet to have them neutered may not have to worry much longer. A new vaccine is being developed which will allow cats and dogs to be sterilised using a simple injection without the need for an operation. Not only could the injection be used to neuter both female and male animals but it would be reversible.

The vaccine works by lowering levels of testosterone, and the potential market for the treatment is huge. Last year, 15 million domestic animals were neutered in the US alone.

The treatment is initially being developed for cats and dogs, but could eventually be used to sterilise a whole host of farmyard animals. It would be particularly useful for racehorse owners who could reverse the castration of their best animals so that they could sire new thoroughbreds after being put out to grass.

The new castration injection is going through clinical trials and could be on sale within a few years.

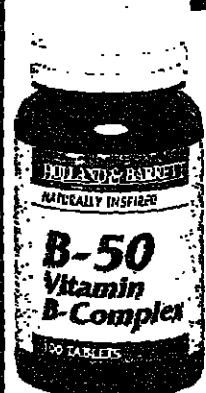
The technology used to create the vaccine is also being used to lower testosterone in humans, a procedure which can help treat prostate cancer victims. It could eventually be used to sterilise humans, although it is not currently being tested for that purpose.

Proteus, a British biotechnology group, discovered the new animal vaccine which is now being developed by a subsidiary of Johnson & Johnson, the US healthcare giant.

Proteus announced yesterday that it had raised £7.6m from City financial institutions to develop further products based on the same process.

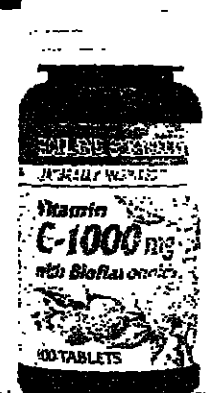
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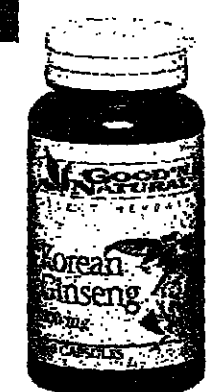
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Depression campaign saddens therapists

By Jeremy Laurence
Health Editor

THE launch of a three-year campaign to improve the treatment of depression caused unhappiness yesterday when psychotherapy organisations discovered they had been left out.

The National Depression Campaign - backed by 11 mental health organisations including the Royal College of Psychiatrists and the Mental Health Foundation - aims to highlight the personal, social and financial burden imposed by the illness which is estimated to affect one in ten people.

But the British Association of Psychotherapists said the campaign was skewed towards drug treatment and the failure to include psychotherapists indicated antagonism to talking cures.

The National Depression Campaign follows a similar campaign run by the Royal College of Psychiatrists from 1992-97 which saw the acceptance of anti-depressant drugs as a beneficial treatment rise threefold to 45 per cent. Dr

David Baldwin, senior lecturer in psychiatry at the University of Southampton and chief spokesman for the new campaign, said: "For those who have a depressive illness, anti-depressants are usually essential before the person can become well enough to benefit fully from talking treatments."

Judy Cooper, of the British Association of Psychotherapists, said this would only apply in cases of extreme depression. "In ordinary depression it is not true at all. I have had a lot of patients who were taking drugs who knew they were not the real solution." She said it was "a shame" that psychotherapy organisations had been omitted because it sent the wrong signal. "Psychotherapists have little training in psychotherapy and to a large degree discredit it."

Dr Baldwin said: "We would not accept that exploratory psychodynamic therapy was helpful in depression and by adopting that stance we do distance ourselves from the therapy organisations."

Circus owner charged

THE circus owner, Mary Chipperfield, 60 has been charged with 15 offences of cruelty to animals. She has been bailed to appear at Basingstoke magistrates' court on 21 May to face charges brought under the Protection of Animals Act 1911. Ms Chipperfield runs Chipperfields Circus, whose headquarters is at Croft Farm, Over Wallop, Hampshire. A Hampshire police spokesman said that during investigations officers had removed a number of animals from her care.

Farmer's baa baa code

A FARMER facing bankruptcy because of sheep rustlers has launched what he hopes will be a fightback using hi-tech microchips and satellite tracking systems. Simon Bland, 33, who farms 120 acres of fell land near Fennith in Cumbria from where he has lost more than £50,000 of stock in five years, and his fiancée, Dr Jane Barker, are developing chips which can be attached to sheep, so if stolen the animals can be traced.

Crackdown on bootleggers

THE Government announced a crackdown on cross-Channel smuggling yesterday, unveiling measures to stem the flood of bootleg drink and cigarettes into the country. Persistent offenders could lose their vehicles and face hefty new fines. The measures are the first wave of a new blitz on cross-Channel contraband said to cost the Treasury nearly £1bn a year.

Post-mortem on baby

A POST-MORTEM examination on six-month-old Caroline Jenson, whose Australian nanny is in custody accused of harming her, has failed to determine the cause of death, Scotland Yard said yesterday. Further tests will now be carried out.

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Hague in the madhouse

WILLIAM HAGUE'S efforts to build a "new" Tory Party still have a long way to travel. One of the most humiliating débâcles of the last election took place in Winchester where the incumbent Gerry Malone lost by one vote, then went to court to force a by-election which he lost by 21,000 votes to the Liberal Democrat Mark Oaten. (Malone now works for his friend Andrew Neil at the struggling *European* magazine.) Just to show how things now stand in Winchester, a Tory candidate is campaigning in the council elections with the slogan, "Vote for George Hollingberry. He must be mad to stand as a Tory!". Will this unique electioneering approach provide Young William with just the inspiration he requires?

A life behind barcodes

Poor Nick Leeson. The trader who brought down Barings and now resides in a Singapore prison must face that country's latest hi-tech innovation in the field of penal servitude. Famous for flogging adolescent mischief-makers and for introducing cameras into public lavatories to catch people who fail to flush, Singapore has just announced a plan to put barcodes on all its prisoners. Each room in prison will have an industrial-strength scanner enabling the warders to locate the cons instantly and to monitor how long it takes them to move from one point to another. Pandora salutes the Singaporean authorities for their humane compassion. Rather than tattoo the barcodes onto the convicts' skin, the codes will be worn on unbreakable, immovable ID bracelets.

In the land of the giving

The mystery of why Diana, Princess of Wales chose not to leave a single penny of her £21m estate to charity will remain unsolved until the lawyers who helped her draw up her will decide otherwise. However, across the Atlantic, a surprising new conundrum has arisen about the charitable actions of



President William Clinton and Vice-President Al Gore. The President and his wife Hillary gave \$270,725 to charity last year despite the fact that they are in a financial black hole with debts (primarily legal) of roughly \$3m. On the other hand, Vice-President Gore and his wife Tipper (pictured) - famous for their dedication to "green" causes and for Tipper's battle to homogenise rock music lyrics - are very comfortable financially. They earned

\$197,729 last year and live in a rent-free mansion in Washington. However, they only gave \$353 to charity. Pandora has been told that one possible explanation might be the fact that the Gores have three children in expensive American private schools and universities. But what could possibly explain the Clintons' seemingly lunatic generosity in the face of impending fiscal ruin? Surely not six years of finance and sex scandals?

Joint effort for French

The House of Lords' cannabis hearings were told by an expert earlier this week that the healthiest means of ingesting the drug in future - in view of the fact that smoking it is highly carcinogenic - might be via inhaler. On the other hand, suggested Professor Heather Ashton of Newcastle University, dope could be taken via suppositories. That might appeal to the French, she said. When asked why, all of her considerable scientific knowledge failed her and she could only say, "they just like them". Her answer made perfect sense to Pandora who thought of other inexplicable Gallic enthusiasms such as dining on horsemeat and driving Citroën 2Cs.

Down the tube, centre left

London's Liberal Democrat youth organisation have just launched a newsletter. Unfortunately, trouble with the production turned its title "Going Underground" into simply "Going Under". Such mistakes can happen to anybody, but Pandora wonders why 700 copies were actually distributed before the junior liberal politicians noticed anything was wrong.

Hot scenes cause offence

STEPHEN FREY, naughty and brilliant as ever, shocked an American audience before a screening of *Wilde* on Monday evening, according to the New York press. The film contains "full frontal smoking" he warned. "Some of you will turn away. Some of you will simply vomit. Oscar Wilde did smoke. We can't hide that." Stephen doesn't seem to realise there are some things you just can't joke about in God's Own Country. He's lucky he wasn't sent straight to prison just like his witty hero.

Pandora

DAILY POEM

Sonnet to Helen

By Pierre Ronsard (French, c1560), translated by W.B. Yeats

When you are old and grey and full of sleep,
And nodding by the fire, take down this book,
And slowly read, and dream of the soft look
Your eyes had once, and of their shadows deep;

How many loved your moments of glad grace,
And loved your beauty with love false or true,
But one man loved the pilgrim soul in you,
And loved the sorrows of your changing face;

And bending down beside the glowing bars,
Murmur, a little sadly, how Love fled
And paced upon the mountains overhead
And hid his face amid a crowd of stars.

This week's Daily Poems select a few of the great translations into English in the 1,300-page compendium *World Poetry*: an anthology of verse from antiquity to our time. The book is edited by Katharine Washburn, John S. Major and Clifton Fadiman (W.W. Norton, £25), and published today to coincide with World Book Day.

Vegetarian dies after battle against CJD

By Ian Stewart
Home Affairs Correspondent

CLARE TOMKINS, a strict vegetarian who had nevertheless contracted the new variant of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, died yesterday at home.

Clare, who would have been 25 next month, had been a fit and active young woman who her father Roger described as "a stunning strawberry blonde, with a personality to match".

Her condition had deteriorated over the last two and a half years until she was bed-bound, clinically blind and in need of 24-hour care.

Mr Tomkins said yesterday: "She fought really hard but she passed away at quarter to six this morning, very peacefully. We have had her at home for eight months now and we feel she is at peace now."

Although Clare had been a strict vegetarian for more than 12 years, it is believed that she almost certainly contracted CJD by eating food contaminated with BSE, or "mad cow disease".

Last month Mr Tomkins, an engineering director from Tonbridge, Kent, gave moving testimony to the BSE inquiry describing how for months doctors had struggled to explain his second daughter's symptoms, which included depression and an inability to walk.

Her family doctor, and subsequently a number of specialists, reckoned the cause of the symptoms, which began in January 1996, was mental rather than physical. She was eventually diagnosed with CJD in August 1997.

As the illness worsened in 1997, "her hands turned in-

wards, her feet too. She became knock-kneed, and her hips dis-jointed, so she could not walk". Mr Tomkins said. "She would make more and more sudden head movements. Her eyesight deteriorated and she cried constantly."

"The worst thing was sometimes at night, when she would howl like a sick, injured animal. She started to hallucinate. It is now clear to me that she was tormented in her condition."

At the High Court in London yesterday six people who live in fear of developing the human form of CJD were seeking damages after developing a psychiatric condition.

The plaintiffs, who are bringing their action against the Department of Health, claim that as children they were "negligently" treated with human growth hormone. Before 1985,

2,000 British children were given the hormone in a programme to treat stunted growth, the court heard that 27 had since died of CJD.

Stephen Irwin QC, counsel for the six, said: "There is not the experience of being in an horrific incident, but rather the recurring anxiety and fear of being about to be part of a horrific incident: the decline into a dementia for which there is no cure."

Among the plaintiffs is the jockey David Lockhart, 27, who worked in the Newmarket stables of trainer Henry Cecil until he lost his nerve and was unable to get on a horse. Mr Irwin said: "His statements indicate the deterioration in his mental condition as he becomes ever more anxious that he may be developing early symptoms of CJD."



Clare Tomkins: 'At night she would howl like a wild animal. It was clear she was tormented by her condition.'

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- Decals and cloth trim - TASTIEST!
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- 5 speed transmission
- Get a nice colour: Cherry Red? Shannon Green? Indigo Blue? Bianca White?
- Engine immobiliser
- Twin speaker radio/cassette (not tinny)
- Silver inserts to bumpers & protective side mouldings
- Tinted glass (ice cool)
- Rear fog lamp
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- 3rd brake light
- HEADLUMPS MUST BE HALOGEN
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Family left confused over E.coli death

A FAMILY learnt from a television news item that their grandmother had died from E.coli 0157 food poisoning hours after being told she was not suffering from the infection, an inquiry was told yesterday.

And five months after Mary Smith's death, an appointment card was delivered asking her to attend Monklands hospital in Lanarkshire for an E.coli check-up. Her grand-daughter, Sharon McKellar, told the inquiry in Motherwell that she was "livid" at the later blunder.

She was giving evidence on the third day of the inquiry into the world's worst outbreak of E.coli 0157 food poisoning, in which up to 21 elderly people died in Lanarkshire and central Scotland in late 1996 and 1997.

Mrs Smith, of Motherwell, died in Monklands hospital, on 28 December 1996. She had fallen

ill a month earlier after eating meat from a Scotmid store. Her granddaughter told the inquiry that on the day the elderly woman was dying, a doctor sat with her for an hour and told her no E.coli had been found in tests.

"We left the hospital three hours later only to see on the TV news that she had died from E.coli," she said. "We were very distressed and I started phoning round to see who had released the statement to the press."

She contacted the Scottish Office, Lanarkshire Health Board, Monklands hospital, and police but got no answer.

"Whoever put out that statement also saw fit to include that my grandfather had also died 10 days earlier because that was also on the news," she told the inquiry.

"There was a lot of misin-

formation floating about, because the TV showed John Barr's shop in Wishaw, but the meat my granny ate was bought at Scotmid. It was not fair to John Barr."

She said that days later she received an apology from Dr Syed Ahmed, head of public health for Lanarkshire, who visited. He told the family that the latest test results had come from a laboratory in Aberdeen and were in an office at the time staff, unaware of this, were speaking to the family.

"Throughout, there was a total lack of information to relatives," she told the inquiry. "There were plenty of press officers - but no relatives' officers."

The appointment card for her grandmother arrived on 3 May, asking the dead woman to attend five days later.

"I could not believe she was being asked to go for a check-up in the same ward she died in," Mrs McKellar said.

She sought explanations but got none, and only got an apology after she threatened to go to the press. "By the time May 8 came, I was livid that no one had come to me with an apology," she said. But that night three letters of apology were delivered to her home from the hospital chief executive, a ward sister and a doctor.

Mrs McKellar, who said she believed E.coli also played a part in her grandfather's death, said lessons should be learnt.

"My grandparents were perfectly healthy before this happened and they were not ready to die, not by any manner of means, no matter what age they were."

The inquiry continues.



First-class performer: Ernie Wise in London yesterday launching the Royal Mail's new 26p stamp which features his late partner, Eric Morecambe. The 'comedians' series has been designed by Gerald Scarfe. Photograph: Philip Meech

Bugs threaten antibiotics

By Charles Arthur
Science and Technology Editor

ANTIBIOTICS are being over-used to an extent that undermines their ability to cure killer diseases, and poses a major threat to public health, a Parliamentary inquiry warned yesterday.

Separately, British scientists at the Soil Association in Bristol warned that stringent controls are needed to prevent the routine use of antibiotics in farm animals, because "antibiotic resistance is developing in... [the] animals and passing to the human population".

The reports reflect growing alarm in this country and abroad at the emergence of strains of bacteria that cannot be destroyed by antibiotics. Fears were fuelled last year by the discovery of bugs in Japan and the United States resistant to the antibiotic vancomycin, which is normally the last line of defence against infection. The bug was an unusual strain of the MRSA bacterium (methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus), a common cause of hospital infections in Britain.

Lord Soulsby, chair of the House of Lords Science and Technology Committee, said: "Misuse and over-use of an-

tibiotics are now threatening to undo all their early promises and success in curing disease."

The inquiry had been "an alarming experience", said Lord Soulsby, adding that "the greatest threat is complacency". He said urgent action was needed to avert "the dire prospect of revisiting the pre-antibiotic era". The committee urged a rethink on cuts facing the Public Health Laboratory Service (PHLS).

At an international conference organised by the PHLS in London last October, Professor Brian Duerden, its deputy director, said vancomycin-resistant enterococci had emerged in some hospitals in London that were "almost untreatable".

The Lords called for better education of doctors to persuade patients not to demand unnecessary prescriptions of antibiotics, and also to complete courses of drugs when given them.

Patrick Holden, director of the Soil Association, pointed out that the UK was the only EU member to oppose a ban last year on a growth-promoting antibiotic for animals called Avoparcin.

Richard Young, who wrote a report titled *Inadequacies in the Regulation of Farm Antibiotics*, said: "We are on the brink of being unable to treat a range of life-threatening diseases."

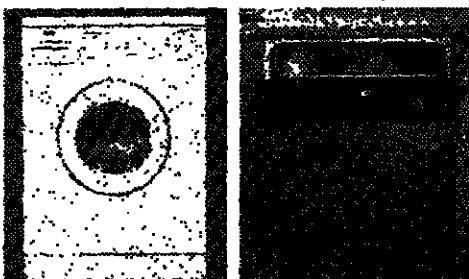
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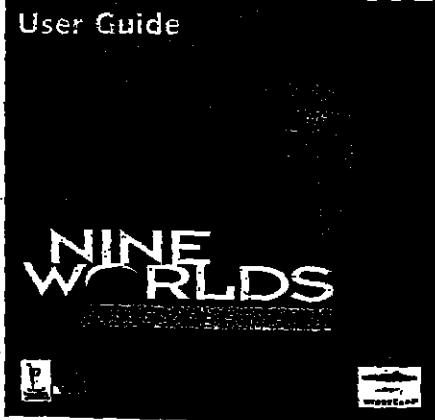
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Scots case may bring pressure on Condon

By Kathy Marks

IAN Oliver, the Grampian Police chief constable, was still sitting tight in his office yesterday, apparently impervious to demands for his resignation. One can only hope that Sir Paul Condon, his counterpart in London, is equally thick-skinned.

For if the buck stops at the top in Aberdeen, as Donald Dewar, the Secretary of State for Scotland, has so memorably declared, it may equally be presumed to do so in London, where the Metropolitan Police stands accused of incompetence over the murder of Stephen Lawrence.

In Mr Oliver's case, a damning report on his force's handling of the investigation into

'Dewar's actions reveal a new willingness by politicians to criticise police'

the murder of schoolboy Scott Simpson by Steven Leisk, a known paedophile, prompted Mr Dewar to call on him to "pack his bags".

Sir Paul can expect a scathing indictment of the Met when the inquiry into the racist murder of Stephen Lawrence publishes its report later this year. The inquiry, which is in its fourth week, has heard a devastating litany of allegations against investigating officers.

It remains to be seen whether Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, will call on Sir Paul to fall on his sword. There are major differences between the two cases. But what seems certain, after events this week in Grampian, is that highest ranking police officers are no longer regarded as untouchable.

Historically, chief constables have not been held accountable for the conduct of their officers, unless they were directly involved. Nor are they

wont, following critical reports to proffer their resignation as a symbolic gesture.

In that sense, the treatment of Mr Oliver may mark a turning point. For it ministers are prepared to throw the book at chief constables, the latter may find it preferable to go quietly.

As Sir Paul reads the report on the Leisk investigation, he will hear unmistakable echoes of the allegations levelled against his own officers at the Lawrence inquiry. His conclusions of incompetence, neglect of duty and lost opportunities, for instance - all charges made against south London police by Edmund Lawson, QC, counsel to the inquiry.

The report says that Grampian police had all the information they needed to solve the mystery of Scott's disappearance within a few hours, but that they ignored it. At the Lawrence inquiry, officers have admitted that they received so many tip-offs that they could have made arrests within 24 hours - instead of which they waited a fortnight.

The list of uncanny similarities goes on. But there are also singular aspects to the Grampian case which mean that, as far as its reverberations for chief constables go, it may remain a one-off. There are exacerbating factors, such as Mr Oliver's arrogance in the face of criticism.

More importantly, his force is tiny compared with the Met and Dr Oliver might reasonably be deemed to have direct managerial responsibility.

Mike Bennett, for example, chairman of the Metropolitan Police Federation, believes, not unsurprisingly, that chief constables should bear more of the blame for the failures of their subordinates.

What Mr Dewar's robust reaction does reveal is a new willingness on the part of politicians to criticise the police. There was a time when they were reluctant to do so because of public esteem for the service. But nowadays people are far more cynical about the police, so there less votes to be lost in putting the boot in.

Crimes and punishment, page 16



Pictures in words: Selina Woodruff displaying the four-million word dictionary at Colnaghi's in London yesterday Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

Dictionary is a work of art at £10,000

IT WAS fitting that the newest dictionary of art was on view yesterday in an Old Bond Street gallery next to a Canaletto painting. For the book comes with a price tag one associates with the wilder dreams of the art market, writes David Lister.

Purchasing the leather-bound *Dictionary of Art* with marble endpapers and gilt edges will set you back £10,000. The limited edition of 250 copies comes in 34 volumes and took 15 years to put together.

Surprisingly, most of the images in the dictionary are in black and white. Katharine Douglas, who was handling the publicity for the publishers Macmillan, explained: "If we had put more colour in, the book could have become prohibitively expensive." It is a moot point how much in excess of £10,000 a book has to be to count as prohibitively expensive.

On show at Colnaghi's yesterday, the dictionary had already clocked up one sale. The gallery owners bought a full set for their library. "It's an excellent book that we will definitely use," said Selina Woodruff, a staff member. Now they will just have to sell a painting to pay for it.



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Blair pledge on prisoner release

By Colin Brown
and Alan Murdoch

TONY BLAIR gave an assurance to MPs in the Commons that terrorist prisoners will not be given early release under the Northern Ireland peace deal if they are still a threat to society.

As MPs and TDs in London and Dublin gave their backing to referendums on the Good Friday settlement, Mr Blair sought to reassure the Ulster Unionists about the deal he brokered in Northern Ireland.

But the late-night Commons session on legislation setting up a Northern Ireland assembly exposed the splits in David Trimble's Ulster Unionist party over the deal.

Mr Trimble and his deputy, John Taylor, were attacked by Ian Paisley, the Democratic Unionist Party leader, for being absent as Mr Trimble's Unionist MPs attacked the deal.

President Bill Clinton is expected to forestall his visit to Ulster until after the 22 May referendums on both sides of

the border to avoid upsetting Unionist voters, the Irish Prime Minister, Bertie Ahern gave a clear hint yesterday. Mr Ahern who is due to have consultations with Jim Steinberg, deputy US security adviser, in Dublin next week about the prospects for a presidential trip, confirmed the visit was still on the cards.

"The issue is not so much in our jurisdiction, but that it might create disharmony in Northern Ireland. The balance was that the visit might be just after the referendum debate and before they go into a campaign for the new Northern Ireland Assembly," he said.

The release of prisoners remains a difficult issue for Dublin and the British government. Mr Blair told the Commons that prisoners who were "a threat or attached to organisations that are carrying on violence" would not be eligible for early release, and those who were released would be on licence so they could be returned to prison, if they broke the peace agreement.

The Prime Minister also reinforced the assurances given in a recent letter to Mr Trimble that ministers in the new Northern Ireland assembly would be barred from holding office in Ulster if their parties were involved in renewed violence or had refused to take part in substantial decommissioning over the next two years. But he refused to write that assurance into the legislation which MPs were asked to rush through the Commons last night to allow the elections to the Assembly to take place.

In the Dail, the issue marked the only serious difference between the six main Dail parties during the two-day debate.

The Justice Minister, John O'Donoghue, said the Government's "view" was that those charged with the murder of Garda Jerry McCabe in Adare, Limerick in 1996 would not come within the ambit of the agreement's release provisions. But the Labour leader, Ruairi Quinn, warned against operating a different policy on prisoners on either side of the border.



Ethical cuppa: Clare Short, Secretary of State for International Development, sipping tea at the House of Commons launch yesterday of the 'soundly sourced' Co-Op 99 Tea. Leading article, page 18
Photograph: Rul Xavier

Warning on Mid East stalemate

By Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

THE Prime Minister, dubbed "the angel of peace" by a German newspaper commentator this week, yesterday told the Commons that continuing stalemate in the Middle East posed a threat to "the stability of the entire world."

The warmth of European reaction to Tony Blair's mission extended to the French Foreign Ministry, which suggested he might have delivered the kiss of life to the peace process.

In the Commons, Labour MPs praised his efforts. Answering a question from Linda Parham, MP for Ilford North, Mr Blair told the House he welcomed the plans by Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, and Yasser Arafat, chairman of the Palestinian Authority, to come to London for meetings on 4 May with Madeleine Albright, US Secretary of State.

"I plan to meet both as well," he said. "We will play any role we can that it is helpful for us to play, though I stress again that we should not cut across anything being done by the US. But I believe if there is goodwill on both sides, then progress can be made." However, Mr Blair warned: "If progress is not made, then this dispute will carry on threatening not just the stability of the Middle East but the stability of the entire world."

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Oxfam reveals UK's £660m arms trade

By Fran Abrams
Political Correspondent

A SECRET £660m British trade in guns and other small arms is prolonging the misery of war in dozens of developing countries, a leading charity claims in a report out today.

Despite assurances that only a handful of United Kingdom companies make small arms and ammunition, Oxfam publishes a list of 120. The charity says it is "business as usual" for the arms business under Robin Cook's new rules. It also claims that China is more open about the arms it exports than Britain.

The report traces how small guns and ammunition made in the UK go to more than 100 countries, many of them desperately poor. The UK trade in small arms such as handguns, pistols, shotguns, rifles and rocket launchers amounts to around £660m a year, it says. While the catalogue from the Defence Export Services Organisation at the Ministry of Defence lists just eight UK companies involved in small arms manufacture and supply and one making ammunition, Oxfam has a list of 120.

"It is difficult to imagine any other British industry which could cause death and injury on a large scale and remain not merely unaccountable but receive large sums of taxpayers' money in export credit guarantees," says the report, "Small Arms, Wrong Hands".

The charity says that although commentators have tended to focus on major arms deals, the post-Cold War world has fallen prey to "a bewildering array of separatist and counter-insurgency wars, border disputes, ethnic and religious violence" and other "low-intensity conflicts". Of 27 countries in Africa to which the UK has supplied light weapons, 71 per cent are suffering armed conflict.

Oxfam welcomed Britain's recent commitment to cut links between aid and the arms trade. The Government has also promised that state support for exports to highly indebted countries will only be given to "productive" products for the next two years. However, the secrecy still surrounding arms exports is unacceptable, it says.

A spokesman for the Foreign Office said the Government had argued vigorously within the European Union and in a forum of arms-trading countries for greater controls. Under Robin Cook's ethical foreign policy there would be an annual report on arms exports. "This is actually an area where we believe our record is a good one. In particular, the export controls we have in place constitute one of the toughest regimes in existence," he said.

Small Arms, Wrong Hands: Oxfam, 274 Banbury Road, Oxford, 01865 313600; Oxfam website, www.oxfam.org.uk.

Tory chairman sees end of the big givers

FOREIGN donations to the Conservatives have dried up since the election, the party chairman, Cecil Parkinson, told the Neill inquiry into political funding yesterday, writes Fran Abrams.

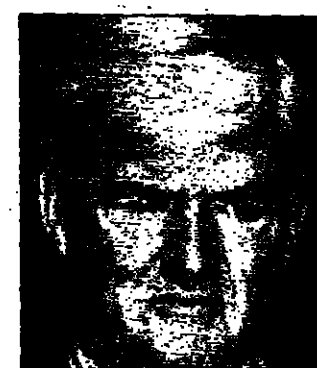
Corporate donations were in terminal decline, rich benefactors were being put off by the threat of having their names published and membership was only just beginning to pick up after the election defeat, he said.

The party's overdraft is believed to be between £1.5m and £2m, and more than 50 staff have been made redundant or have left without being replaced.

Asked if his party treasurer was worried about the party finances as a result of the decline in large donations, Lord Parkinson replied: "Congratulations, that is a very good analysis."

"We have been around for a long time and we intend to stay around for a long time. But it is very, very difficult."

Foreign donations were a vexed question, because it was hard to decide who should



Parkinson: 'It is very difficult'

count as foreign, he said. "Fortunately, since I have been chairman - or unfortunately - we haven't had to face the problem. Since the last election we have had no donors about whom we have even had to wonder whether they could be classified as foreign," he said.

"We think the more prescriptive you are the more incentive there is for people to try to find ways around it. We think the days of huge sums being available to political parties to spend to try to buy elections are probably over."

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New Forest set to become a National Park

By Michael McCarthy
Environment Correspondent

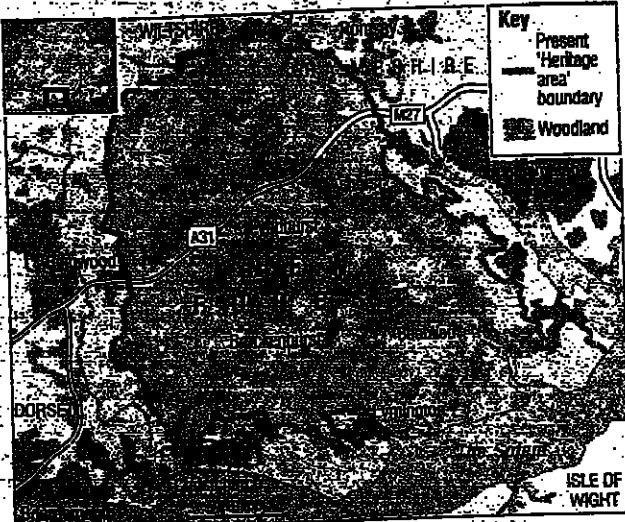
THE New Forest should at last be given National Park status, officials of the Countryside Commission, the Government's landscape advisory body, will recommend today.

If accepted by ministers, their advice will end a decade-long wrangle over the precise legal position of the 200-square-mile mixture of ancient woodlands, pasture and open heaths, which is the last uncultivated wilderness of southern England.

Squeezed between Southampton and its oil refineries on the one side, and Bournemouth and its expanding conurbation on the other, the forest, in places virtually unchanged since mediaeval times, is subject to increasing tourism and development pressures. Yet two attempts have failed in the past 10 years to give it National Park status, and the prestige, funding and strong planning powers that go with that status.

The first attempt was headed off inside Whitehall in 1990 by an alliance between the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Forestry Commission, reluctant to give up administrative control over the 67,000 acres of Crown Estate woodland at the heart of the forest.

Then, in 1992, the Conservative government made a specific promise of National Park status for the forest, but failed



to implement it. Instead, the forest is at present labelled a "Heritage Area" - a unique, ad hoc designation that has no statutory force, but allows the forest to have a working boundary, and a committee of local authorities and other interested parties to look after it.

The New Forest Committee is pressing for proper legal protection for the area, and the Countryside Commission feels strongly that it should formally be brought into the national parks "family", although this will require a special arrangement for the 500 commoners, the local people who hold ancient grazing and forestry rights and still turn out their ponies, cattle, sheep and pigs to graze freely through the woodlands. The semi-wild ponies are one

of the area's most distinctive sights. The commoners are represented by the ancient Court of Verderers and this body too would be likely to remain and would need to be incorporated into any new arrangements.

But the benefits of National Park status are undeniable, says the Council for National Parks (CNP), the independent watchdog body representing National Park users' interests. "It would ensure long-term protection of the area, national recognition for its unique landscape and wildlife, and a well-resourced body to care for the New Forest into the next millennium," said Angus Lunn, the CNP chairman.

The Forestry Commission was more equivocal yesterday.

"National Park status would formalise the New Forest Heritage Area and provide greater planning powers and more protection, but it is too early to suggest what the effects would be," a spokesman said.

Officials of the Countryside Commission will recommend National Park equivalent status to their nine commissioners at their meeting in Leeds today.

By contrast, as reported in *The Independent* on Monday, they will recommend that such status be denied the South Downs.

The New Forest was established in 1079 by William the Conqueror as his personal hunting preserve and has remained largely unchanged because the soil is poor and so has never been tilled. Its diverse mixture of habitats provide a stunning mix of wildlife, from red and fallow deer to rare birds such as the honey buzzard and unusual flowers, such as the wild gladiolus.

The area has been most notably celebrated in recent years by the photographer and filmmaker Eric Ashby with his groundbreaking 1961 television documentary *The Unknown Forest*, and his book *The Secret Life of the New Forest*, published in 1989, both of which offered remarkable wildlife portraits, particularly of badgers and foxes. Now 80, Ashby still lives at Badger's Cottage in the north-west of the forest.



Country idyll: Ponies grazing in a scene from Eric Ashby's *The Secret Life of the New Forest* (1989) Photograph: Eric Ashby

Acid rain blamed for thin state of thrush egg shells

By Charles Arthur
Science and Technology Editor



The thrush: Thinning shells could threaten its survival

ACID rain has made the shells of eggs laid by thrushes in Britain progressively thinner over the past 150 years, a new survey suggests. The effect might make it harder for the eggs to hatch, ornithologists fear.

Research by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) in Edinburgh examined eggs from four species of thrushes found in large numbers in the country - the

blackbird, song thrush, mistle thrush and ring ouzel. Rhys Green of the RSPB carried out a survey by comparing the thickness of shells laid now with those from museum collections, some dating back to 1850.

"We wanted to see if there were long-term trends that might be related to environmental pollution," he told *New Scientist* magazine.

The results were clear-cut for most of the species, with a steady decline in the thickness of eggshells

of between 2 and 11 per cent in the period from 1850 to the present day.

Intriguingly, the thickness of blackbird shells follows a sloping curve: it stayed steady between 1850 and 1900, then fell abruptly in the years to 1960, but is now slowly rising - in contrast to the steady decline in shell thickness of birds such as the ring ouzel, which breed on moorland. Thinner shells could affect the birds' survival, though Mr Green says that further research is required to determine this.

The cause is also not clear-cut - but seems most likely to be linked to acid rain rather than pesticides or pollutants, because it predates the wide agricultural use of chemicals such as DDT. By contrast, industrial systems earlier this century loaded the atmosphere with sulphur dioxide from the coal burnt in houses and furnaces. Elsewhere, eggs laid by great tits living in areas with very acid soils have thinner shells than normal.

Acid rain would reduce the

alkaline calcium content of leaf litter eaten by worms, and the snail population - and both are a key part of birds' diets.

It could also suggest the reason why blackbird shells are now growing thicker, after decades when they thinned. "It is tempting to relate this to the clean air legislation of the 1950s," said Mr Green. That banned the burning of anything except smokeless fuel in urban areas, and reduced smog levels dramatically. Pesticides such as DDT - wide-

ly used in British agriculture from 1947 - have previously been found to cause thinning of shells in birds of prey, which absorbed the chemical through animals they captured. But the thinning of thrush eggshells predates that extensively. Mr Green is confident that the survey is reliable, because the collection sites are well documented; and thus the recorded changes derive from external phenomena, rather than from variability had the samples been taken piecemeal.

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Why gifted children may not always get the glittering prizes

By Judith Judd
Education Editor

GIFTED children are not destined for glittering careers, according to a far-reaching study published today.

Research from the Office for Standards in Education shows that those who shine at school in IQ tests and exams often fail to fulfil their potential.

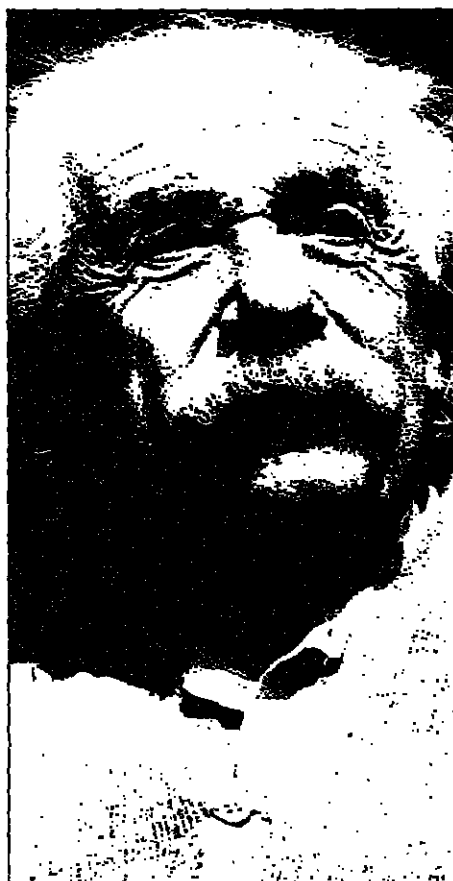
The review of current evidence on very able children cites, for example, a study of 11 "world-changers" by Howard Gardner, professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education in the United States. He found that of those studied, even by the age of 20, only Pablo Picasso's world status was apparent. Others in the review included the composer Igor Fyodorovich Stravinsky; Martha Graham, the American dancer and choreographer; Sigmund Freud and Mahatma Gandhi.

Famous visual thinkers such as Einstein, Edison and Churchill all did badly at school. The key to success, the findings suggest, lies more in dedication, motivation, hard work and support from the family than in IQ scores or school achievement.

Professor Joan Freeman, a visiting professor at Middlesex University and the author of the report, quotes a study in San Francisco which has traced 856 boys - and 672 girl - "geniuses" from 1925 to the present day.

All had IQ scores of at least 135, putting them in the top 2 per cent of the population, but their latest review shows that they have not been noticeably more successful as adults than if they had been randomly selected from others of the same social background.

Even children who receive



Latent genius: (left to right) Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Albert Einstein (who did badly at school), artist Pablo Picasso and Sigmund Freud, the originator of psychoanalysis

education geared to high-ability pupils do not stand out from their peers as adults. A study of more than 200 former pupils of the Hunter School for the Gifted in New York (mean IQ 157) found that, by middle-age, all had failed to reach the top of their chosen professions.

Professor Freeman said that there were obvious examples of child prodigies who achieved fame, such as Mozart. "But they are extremely few and far between. William Hague could be said to be one. Personality, motivation and the opportunity

to use your talents are very important."

Her report takes issue with the Government's policy of support for accelerating bright children by a year or more. "The overall conclusion from research is that acceleration can work, particularly for mathematics and second languages, but with very strong caveats."

Even the academic advantages of acceleration are in doubt, it says. Professor Freeman's own research suggests that the normal problems of growing up may be exaggerated

with acceleration, for example, with the issue of staying out late like older classmates.

She said: "It is a crude and cheap method of dealing with the gifted." They would be much better served by well-planned enrichment activities after school and at weekends: journalism courses for talented writers or computer courses for future programmers.

The report warns against labelling children as "gifted". Research in Britain compared a group of children identified by their parents as gifted with a

second group of equal ability who were unlabelled and a third randomly selected group.

Ten years later, when the groups were again interviewed, the young people who had been labelled gifted had often remained the least happy.

"Labelling appeared to have had the effect of putting pressure on children to live up to it in high achievements, notably in the case of those who had been wrongly labelled and could not fulfil their parents' ambitions."

Joan Freeman, Education+

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Maggots used in place of surgeons

By Jeremy Laurence
Health Editor

SOMETIMES it is the old methods that prove the best. In people suffering from a nasty complication of diabetes known as "necrotic toe", doctors have turned to the maggot.

As nature's alternative to modern surgery, the maggot is an effective means of removing dead tissue. Researchers have found that they can be used to amputate diseased toes cleanly, painlessly and with less risk than a swipe of the scalpel.

In a study in *The Diabetic Foot*, a medical journal, Dr Gerry Rayman and colleagues at Ipswich Hospital, Suffolk, describe how they have used the larvae - maggots - of the greenbottle fly to excise the gangrenous toes of diabetes sufferers.

Poor circulation causes ulcers in the feet of people with diabetes which can be hard to heal and may turn gangrenous. The complication may threaten the limbs and the lives of patients but surgery can be risky.

Dr Rayman says maggots are an effective and safe alternative. "It is readily accepted by the majority of patients and has the benefit of abolishing the offensive odour associated with infection and necrosis."

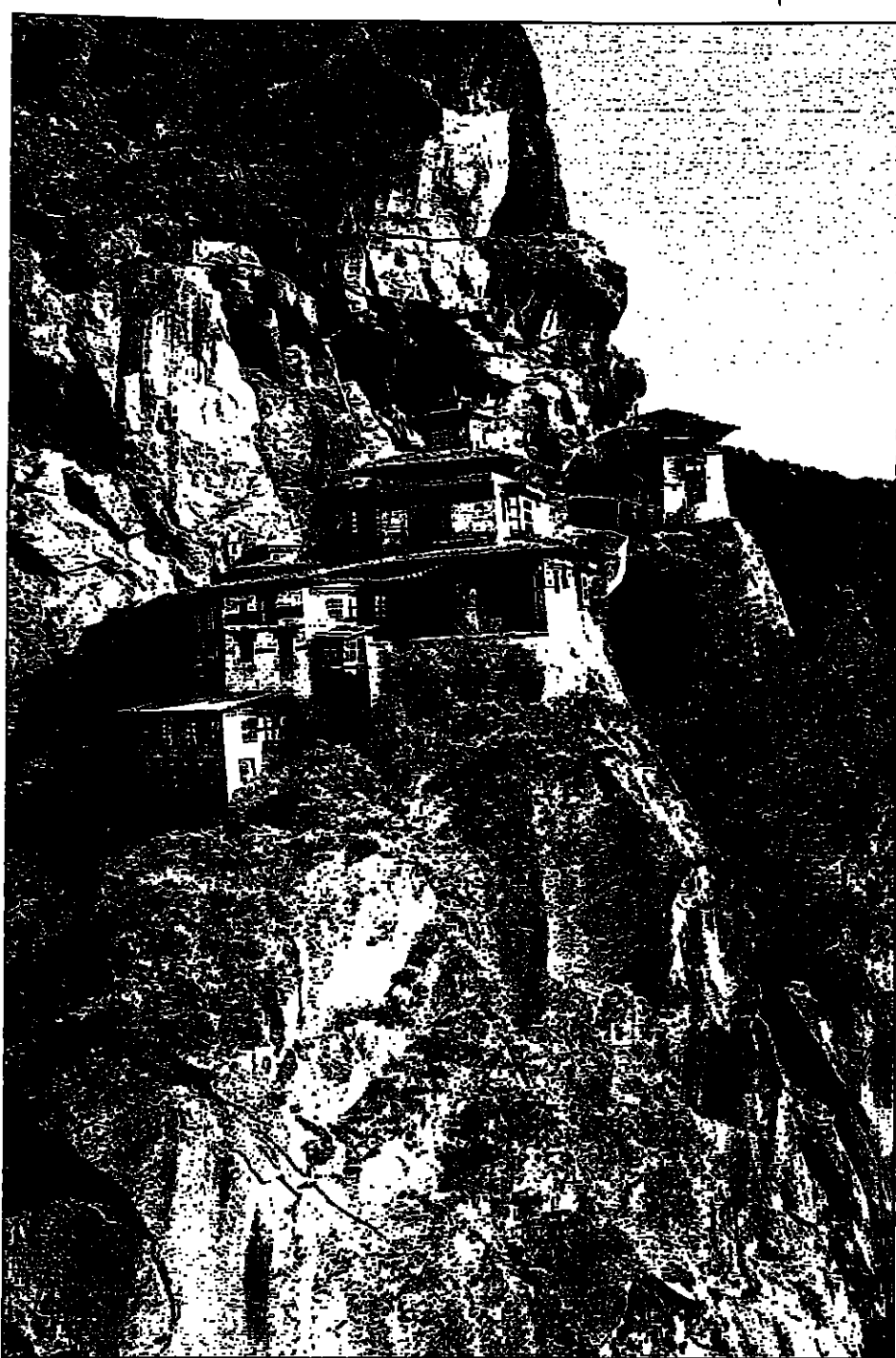
The procedure involves the insertion of about a dozen maggots into the wound - depending on its size - which are then sealed in place with a dressing. Every three days they are cleaned out and new ones introduced. They produce a powerful cocktail of enzymes which break down the dead tissue and the amputation is usually complete within six weeks.

The research team said convincing patients of the benefits of the treatment had not been difficult, once their initial revulsion had been overcome.

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STARTS TOMORROW AT CINEMAS EVERYWHERE



Sacred spot: The eighth-century temple of Taktsang, 25 miles from the Bhutan capital, Thimphu, which was destroyed by fire on Sunday night. Photograph: Sherwin Cristofari/AP

Fire destroys 'Tiger's Lair' shrine revered by Bhutan's Buddhists

By Peter Popham
in New Delhi

FIRE has destroyed one of the most famous and highly venerated temples in the Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan.

The temple of Taktsang, "Tiger's Lair", clung to a sheer rock face 3,000ft above the valley floor in the west of the country. Tiny and precariously poised, it was the most famous image of Bhutan internationally; to the Bhutanese it was revered as the spot on which the nation's founding saint, the monk Padma Sambhava, defeated the demons which stood in the way of the spread of Buddhism. But on Sunday evening it burnt to the ground.

Pious Bhutanese were quick

to declare that the disaster was a terrible omen for the nation's future. A rumour reaching Kathmandu in nearby Nepal said that the fire had been started by lightning. But the temple's structure was ancient, dried-out timber and it was lit by oil lamps, so there was a simpler and more humdrum explanation. On Tuesday, the smouldering ruins were still too hot to approach. The only person living in the temple, a caretaker, was missing.

Taktsang was perched high above Paro, Bhutan's most beautiful valley and the crossroads of its two most important trade routes to Tibet. According to legend, Padma Sambhava flew to this ledge high above the valley on the back of a tiger

— hence the temple's name. After meditating for three months in the cave in the rock face which became the temple's sanctum sanctorum, he defeated the demons and established the rule of Buddhism in Bhutan. This is supposed to have occurred in the eighth century, but the temple has been rebuilt several times.

The temple, a strenuous three-hour climb from the road that threads through the valley, contained ancient paintings and images, including one statue, which guarded the meditation cave deep within the temple, of Padma bestriding his grinning tigress, commonly interpreted as an avatar of his wife. How many of these treasures, have survived is so far unknown.

Rome floats a fund to trade on its past

Italy's capital is drawing up a list of historic state-owned properties to privatise

By Anne Hanley
in Rome

IT MAY BE some time before the "for sale" signs go up outside the Colosseum, but a recent law makes such a sale a possibility. Later this year, selected state-owned properties in Rome will be placed in special real estate funds, shares in which will be sold to the private sector. "We may start with a fund for Rome's Foro Italico sports complex," said Giacomo Vacaggio who heads the committee which is currently drafting the list of properties to be sold. "But then we could do the same thing for the Uffizi Gallery or the Roman Forum." Or, as Mr Vacaggio joked, why not the Colosseum? "We could hand it over to the Americans to run," he said.

The idea is not new. In a famous film of 1962, Italy's best-loved comic, Totò, tried to "sell" the Trevi Fountain to a hapless, gullible American tourist. Any attempts by Mr Vacaggio and his team to do the same thing with the Colosseum, however, would be bound to unleash a storm of protest. Indeed, even his joking about it set alarm bells ringing. "We wouldn't even think of it," said culture minister Walter Veltroni, who in general has no qualms about giving the private sector an active role in heritage. In 1996, he signed a deal with industrialists involving them directly in the restoration and maintenance of Italy's



Tourist magnet: Bringing in 1.7bn lira a month from admission fees, Rome's amphitheatre is a major money-spinner

museums and archeological sites by exchanging picture rights for sponsorship cash.

"We are talking about one of the world's most important historic monuments," he said, clearly miffed by Mr Vacaggio's levity. "It would be like selling the pyramids to an oil company."

In fact, it would be more like selling off a gushing oil well: since last autumn, when Rome started charging visitors to enter the Colosseum, the amphitheatre has brought in 1.7bn lira (£0.6m) a month. Few other state assets can claim to be such money-spinners. Innumerable barracks, historic

buildings and warehouses are more of a liability than a boon, generating no revenue and costing the state dear in upkeep.

It is these that the potential investor will find on offer when Mr Vacaggio and his team complete their list in June. By that time, anything up to 1,000 properties will have been selected. An initial short list contains just under 300.

Best-known of these is the Foro Italico, the mosaic- and statue-packed fascist-era sports centre on the banks of the Tiber in northern Rome, where

swimming pools, tennis courts and running tracks lie idle except for brief bursts of activity during occasional top-level sports meetings. And except, of course, for the weekend bustle around the 80,000-seat Stadio Olimpico which is home to the capital's first division Roma and Lazio football teams.

Mr Vacaggio's committee has valued the Foro at around one trillion lire. Investors underwriting the fund, he explained, will be offered discounted concessions for use of the complex. And everyone—state, investors and general public—will benefit from the more efficiently and profitably run facilities.

So could the Colosseum not become even more of a gold mine with the same treatment?

At the culture ministry, a spokeswoman was prepared to admit that selling the amphitheatre was "theoretically" possible but, she added, "the sale would need our permission and we wouldn't give it".

"Who knows what private enterprise might do there to pull in even greater crowds," she wondered. "Strip-tease performances every evening?"

Alternatively, of course, an entrepreneur with a taste for the gorier side of ancient Rome might fix up those crumbling seats, replace the floor and bring back the wild beasts. Once again Flavian's amphitheatre might echo to the roars and screams of lions and gladiators.

Harassment case delayed

JUDGMENT was deferred in a case with implications for the definition of sexual harassment in the US and also Paula Jones's suit against President Clinton. Kimberly Ellerth says she was harassed and threatened by her boss, Theodore Slowik. The firm says that because she suffered no demonstrable detriment—she was promoted but subsequently resigned—there is no liability. Ms Ellerth says she quit because of her ordeal.

— Mary Dejevsky, Washington

Serial killer

TESTS on sperm found on trains on the Italian Riviera where two women died indicate the same man killed them both. It is suspected he may also have murdered six other women earlier this year.

— AP, Rome

Rebel caught

A COMMANDER of the Peruvian Shining Path rebels, Pedro Quinteros, was captured while eating at a restaurant in a Lima shantytown.

— AP, Lima

Editor dies

CHARLES CHIKEREMA, the militant Communist editor of the *Herald*, Zimbabwe's main state newspaper, collapsed and died two months after President Mugabe put him into the job to replace an editor he blamed for inciting dissent.

— AP, Harare

Net goes ape

KOKO, a gorilla that understands sign language, will answer questions on the Internet next week in what is being called the first inter-species computer chat.

— AP, New York

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France 'had no hand in Rwanda genocide'

By John Lichfield
in Paris

THE SON of the late President François Mitterrand categorically denied yesterday that France conducted a clandestine policy towards Rwanda, which may have contributed to the genocide of up to 1,000,000 people.

Jean-Christophe Mitterrand, who was for six years his father's special adviser on Africa, also angrily denied suggestions that he was personally embroiled in Rwanda policy. "No, I was not a personal friend of the Rwandan president... No, I do not own several hectares of land in Rwanda," Mr Mitterrand told a committee of the French parliament which is investigating France's role in the central African nation in the early Nineties.

THE RWANDAN government will publicly execute 33 prisoners tomorrow, the first of 130,000 genocide suspects to be tried for their part in the slaughter of an estimated 300,000 people in 1994, writes Sam Jany.

Radio Rwanda said yesterday that the executions would take place in a soccer stadium in the capital, Kigali, and in four provincial towns. Quoting a cabinet communiqué, the report added: "This will act as a lesson to people who do not respect the life of others."

The executions, to be carried out by firing squad, are meant as a warning to Hutu militants "still bent on pursuing genocide".

The cabinet ordered the sentences on Monday, in a meeting in which President Pasteur Bizimungu, a Hutu, sought to placate survivors of the massacres by ignoring pleas for amnesty. Trials in Rwanda began in 1996 and scores of people have been sentenced to death for their part in the genocide. The brisk pace of these trials has highlighted the sluggish progress of the United Nations court, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, set up to try the genocide ring-leaders, which has yet to set a date to deliver its first verdict.

The executions come two weeks before Kofi Annan, Secretary General of the UN, is due to visit Rwanda.

It has been alleged by academic and journalistic investigators that France allowed itself to become too closely associated with extremist elements in the majority Hutu community in Rwanda. As a result it did nothing to prevent preparations for a genocidal repression of the minority Tutsi community and, it is alleged, continued secretly to supply weapons after the massacres of Tutsis and moderate Hutus began in April 1994.

Mr Mitterrand said these allegations were "lies and defamations". His father had always acted, in "a confused and often cruel situation", to do his best to bring democracy and peace to Rwanda. On Tuesday, four senior politicians once responsible for French policy in Rwanda, including two former prime ministers, took similar questions from the parliamentary study group. There is only one precedent in recent French history for the cross-examination of such a group of former ministers by parliamentarians in this way. Edouard Balladur, prime minister in 1994, stoutly rejected any suggestion of complicity by his government in the genocide, or improper support for the Hutu regime which carried it out. He strongly hinted, however, that there might have been a parallel policy, controlled by President Mitterrand, of which he had no knowledge.

On several occasions, he declined to rule out the possibility that arms from other French sources did reach the Rwandan government after the massacres began. No such deliveries were made "as far as my present knowledge goes", he said. Asked whether arms could have been sent through unofficial channels, as the French press and others have suggested, Mr Balladur said: "That is the question I am, myself, asking. I have not received a reply." Both he and Alain Juppé, foreign minister at the time and later prime minister, implied that the true responsibility for the genocide should be attributed to Uganda and the United States.

Both these countries had supported the Tutsi rebels, who had come to power in Rwanda, as a result of the 1994 genocide and civil war. "Who profited from the crime?" Mr Juppé asked, at one stage. This amounts to a breathtaking assertion, or implication, that the Tutsis cynically brought about the massacre of hundreds of thousands of members of their own ethnic or social group (including their own relatives) in the hope of regaining power. The parliamentary inquiry is expected to last four months.

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Farmers thrown lifeline in Australia's docks war

By Robert Milliken
in Sydney

FARM leaders in New South Wales yesterday met maritime union leaders in Sydney who offered to allow farm products stranded on the Sydney docks to be moved out through picket lines. But farmers across the rest of Australia are preparing to smash through picket lines on wharves, where sacked dock workers and their supporters are mounting a crippling blockade.

As the country's dock war entered its second week, Donald McGauchie, president of the powerful farm lobby, the National Farmers' Federation, said a strategy had been drawn up for farmers to drive lorries, tractors and other farm vehicles on to wharves to deliver produce and collect stranded cargo. "The whole thing is in train," he said. "It will occur some time later this week. We've had enough."

The dispute between farmers and dock workers, or "wharfies" as they are known in Australia, is over the future of the Maritime Union of Australia, which has had a monopoly over jobs on the country's docks for almost 100 years. The future of unionism in Australia as a whole is also involved, as well as the reputation of the federal conservative coalition government led by John Howard.

Mr Howard is supporting Patrick, the company at the centre of the row, which sacked its 1,400 workforce, all union members, and replaced them with non-union contract workers on 7 April. Patrick is Australia's second-biggest cargo handling company. It claimed that its union workers were overpaid, inefficient and performing at a rate one-third below the world's best practice for handling containers.

Outraged "wharfies", union leaders and supporters have mounted pickets and blockades outside Patrick terminals in an attempt to make them inoperable.

On Monday, farmers in the New South Wales town of Wollgott held Bob Carr, the state's premier, captive for almost two hours at the local airport and demanded that he order police to remove the pickets at Patrick's Sydney terminal.

But on Tuesday, Patrick appeared to suffer a setback when Mr Justice Tony North ruled in the Federal Court that the company should re-hire all its sacked union workers and stop hiring replacements from elsewhere. In a case brought by the maritime union, the judge ruled that Patrick had "arguably" engaged in an "unlawful conspiracy" in its treatment of the union workers.

When it sacked them, Patrick announced that its subsidiary employing companies were no longer solvent and were in the hands of administrators. The judge ruled that Patrick had breached the law by putting a complex corporate structure in place to make it easier to sack its own workers, and that they were sacked because they were members of the maritime union.

Australian law forbids an employer from dismissing someone simply because they belong to a union. The company has launched an appeal against the ruling.

The Australian Stock Exchange responded to the ruling - which has raised the stakes in the dock war - by suspending trading in Lang Corporation, Patrick's operating company.



Fighting spirit: Angry sacked dockers marching through barricades at a Melbourne port to report for work yesterday, but they were later turned back by police. Photograph: AFP

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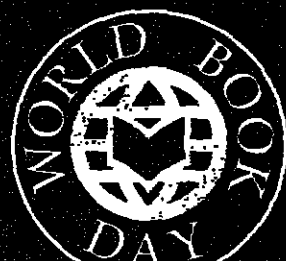
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Danger zone: A militiaman, armed with a Second World War German machine-gun, on guard outside his village in the Kabyle mountains

Photograph: Robert Fisk

Militias implicated in Algeria's reign of terror

By Robert Fisk
Middle East Correspondent

LIKE BLOOD, the truth is seeping out of Algeria. The first trickle appeared in the privately owned French language newspaper *Liberté* and in *La Tribune*: that at least a dozen officials of the local "home guard" – the "auto-defence" units of village "guards", armed and supplied by the government – had been arrested for imposing a reign of terror against local civilians around Relizane in the west of the country, 160 miles from Algiers. Two mass graves had been dug up, containing the remains of 22 people, some of whom had been buried alive. The mayors of Relizane and the neighbouring town of Odjoudja had also been detained.

According to the newspapers – whose information was not officially confirmed – El-Haj Fergane, a member of the RDN (the government party, the Rassemblement National Démocratique), and Haj el-Abed, the head of the local defence unit, had been arrested in Oran. More disturbing was the evidence of a widow whose husband had been, she said, executed by the Relizane mayor. Within a few days, more revelations were forthcoming.

At least 128 cases were being brought before the Algerian courts, according to the newspaper *Al Watan*, of po-

licemen and "home guard" militia involving the murder of 34 civilians. The paper said that 120 police officers were now imprisoned in the old French jail of Barberousse at Sétif in Algiers city, charged with theft, assault, corruption and "abuse of their power".

It added that several members of the "home guard" had been sentenced to four months imprisonment, that a policeman had received a 20-year jail term for death threats and that another had been given 15 years for the rape of four women in a public garden in Algiers city.

Hitherto, the Algerian authorities have always blamed "Islamists" for the series of massacres in the country, whose civil war has claimed up to 150,000 lives since elections – which the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) would have won – were cancelled by the military-backed government in 1991. Algerian officials have been under growing pressure from the United Nations, the European Union and the United States to

bring the perpetrators of the village massacres to justice, and it is possible that these latest revelations are an attempt to assuage the storm of criticism.

Three former members of the security forces, who are now seeking political asylum in Britain, last autumn gave *The Independent* terrifying evidence of torture and "disappearances" of civilians in the Algerian war. But the reports from Oran suggest that the "home guard" units may have played a part in the slaughter of villagers, many of whom voted for the FIS in the 1991 elections. The government blames the Islamic Armed Group (GIA) for the bloodbath around Algiers in which hundreds of men, women and children were killed with knives and hatchets; many were decapitated.

It was Abdelrahman Meziane-Cherif, when minister of interior in 1995, who first decided to arm villagers against the "terrorists" whom the government accused of murdering civilians in the war. Thousands of men in remote hamlets were given weapons, often guns which had been captured from the French during the 1954-62 war of independence, some of them relics from the armours of the Third Reich.

When I visited the "home guard" in the village of Igoudal in the Kabyle mountains in March of 1995, the men were being armed with French

breech-loading rifles, German sub-machine guns of Second World War vintage, and Italian hunting rifles. Officially, all were vetted by the authorities – but the men were already talking about their killing of an "Islamist" from a neighbouring village who had allegedly been carrying a list of Igoudal citizens to be assassinated.

When I asked a armed villager if this was how the Lebanese civil war began, he replied: "Impossible. These men are Algerians fighting for Algeria, who are crushing the fascism of fundamentalism."

It was the eloquent and brave leader of the trade unionist Algerian Workers Party who first spoke out against the arming of these men – again, in an interview with *The Independent*.

The government, she said, had been distributing weapons since 1983. "They say they are to defend isolated regions against the Islamists," she complained in 1995.

"There are now armed groups who are out of control in the confusion of war... When a state delegates its security powers to individuals, the state doesn't exist any more. Now the militias symbolise the privatisation of the war. Some have become little warlords, mafia bands who carry out hold-ups on the roads..."

Her words appear to have been prescient.

Busy time for anti-fun brigade

A part from the amazing feats of local football club Rosenborg – conquerors of Blackburn Rovers, AC Milan and Real Madrid in recent seasons – the people of Trondheim have had little to celebrate since the wild parties of the Vikings. The pillaged treasures are long gone, today's oil money flows into southern towns, and when the unquenchable thirst of the Norsemen of old returns on sullen winter nights, there is nowhere to buy a bottle. A mere handful of state-run liquor stores service more than 100,000 throats in office hours.

"Service", though, is probably the wrong word. Laid out as old-fashioned pharmacies, these shops are designed to make the purchasing of alcohol thoroughly unpleasant. You queue at the counter for an eternity, point at a bottle safely locked up in a glass cupboard, and are asked to hand over ludicrous sums of money in exchange.

Scarcity and inflated prices have unwittingly turned booze into a precious commodity, akin to an elixir of life. It is a rare honour to be treated to a drop by a Norwegian host, and it is no good stroking an empty glass for the whole evening; there will be no refill. Unless, of course, you are sitting in a living room in Trondheim, Nor-

TRONDHEIM DIARY



Imre Karacs

way's moonshine capital. From nothing but sugar and yeast, gallons of spirit are produced on home-made stills. The stuff is invariably foul, though after the third dose the senses are deadened to the yeasty odour and the fruit essences used to mask it. It is very bad manners to salute the "treasure" with anything less than "Boundless delight".

Norway's obsession with penalising alcohol out of existence stems from a 19th-century religious movement. Even today, you cannot get a drink in most villages; hence the spectacle of lobster-pink Norwegians on holiday falling off their deck chairs after one Martini. And the Draconian alcohol laws are set to become tougher, courtesy of the Christian People's

Party which rules the coalition government. The Prime Minister, Kjell Magne Bondevik, hails from the Bible-belt and although he has had himself photographed sipping wine, the zealots in his party are pressing for yet more restrictions. An advert for egg-nog was banned last week, and there are proposals to label spirits as "poison".

But the Christians are reluctant to be perceived as killjoys, so in return for making Norway dry, they are offering to use their divine influence to keep the rain clouds at bay. The party wants to instruct priests to revive a Sunday prayer for "good and beneficial weather". But God appears to be moving in mysterious ways. The true believers in the south-west have just experienced their most rotten Easter in living memory, while the heathens of the north have been basking in glorious sunshine.

Nothing is holier on the Sabbath than a brisk trek up the mountains on skis. The weekly excursions have made Norwegians sickeningly fit and healthy – their one saving grace is that they all smoke like chimneys.

Not for much longer. The anti-fun brigade have been out with their no-smoking

stickers, nailing them to public buildings. Addicts have been driven into the freezing forests for a puff, but now a local authority is trying to stub that out too, erecting no-smoking signs at the intersections of ski-tracks in the wilderness. Five of these have, however, been stolen. It seems there are some things even Norwegians will not put up with.

For a prosperous little nation with negligible unemployment and a cradle-to-grave welfare system second to none, Norway has a surprisingly rampant crime scene. Aside from the stolen signs, there has been an outbreak of graffiti at Trondheim's brand new theatre, and now comes news of a brazen attempt to smuggle illicit goods into the country. Heroin? You may wonder, or guns?

No. Chickens. One ton of frozen German poultry, to be precise, plus a few legs of lamb, found in a van. Subsidies designed to keep Arctic farmers rich have driven up the price of food so even chickens have become intoxicatingly expensive. The owner of the van, a Swede who claimed he was carrying "presents", was fined about £1,000. Next time he should try smuggling alcohol. That is what everybody else does.

US agonises over child kidnap case

By Mary Dejevsky
in Washington

AMERICA'S faltering gauges of vocal public opinion – the broadcast talk shows and Internet chat rooms – have been caught up in a fierce new debate. The subject is Stephen Fagan, 56, who lives in Palm Beach, Florida, and who has been charged with abducting his two children 20 years ago.

He is in a Massachusetts prison, trying to raise the 10 per cent deposit for a \$250,000 (£156,000) bail guarantee.

He is accused of kidnapping his daughters, then five and two, from his wife, who had custody. Now in their early twenties, they waved and blew kisses when their father appeared in court this week.

It is alleged Mr Fagan fled with the girls to Florida in 1979, assumed the name William Martin, constructed a past that involved a spell in the CIA, and remarried three times, each time to a woman who could keep him in the style to which he aspired. A lawyer by training, he became a social success, and brought up his daughters by all ac-

counts responsibly. His double life was exposed after a tip-off.

The facts were checked with his ex-wife, Barbara Kurth, now living in Virginia. This was the first the daughters knew about the true reason for their move to Florida: Mr Fagan had told them their mother had died in a car accident.

Shortly after her ex-husband was charged on Tuesday, Mrs Kurth said she had lived with the loss of her daughters for nearly 20 years and feared even now that she might never be reunited with them. So far they are refusing to see her.

Those taking Mr Fagan's side, mostly men, say the full facts of the abduction have yet to come out. His lawyer says Mr Fagan broke the law only to rescue his children from an allegedly alcohol-abusing mother who neglected them – claims made during acrimonious divorce and custody proceedings – and proved an admirable father. The maximum penalty for child abduction in Massachusetts is four years' jail: it was one year when the Fagan girls were kidnapped. The question exercising lawyers is whether justice can ever be done in this case.

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On World Book Day,
Boyd Tonkin, Literary
Editor, selects 50
works of non-fiction
from the last 53 years
and says why you
should read them

Fifty books to change your life

WHEN IN DOUBT, make a list. With the close of a century and a millennium ready to deliver an apocalyptic double whammy, the culture of the Nervous Nineties has begun to draw up literary inventories as if - well, as if there were no tomorrow. They stretch from the patrician (Harold Bloom's *The Western Canon*) to the populist (the Waterstones' customers who crowned *The Lord of the Rings* as their Book of the Century). Whatever their height of brow, these pre-millennial scorecards share a tilt towards imaginative literature, and to novels in particular. So here, to celebrate World Book Day, is a fiction-free list to wreck your breakfast and cause mayhem over the marmalade.

In date order, I have chosen 50 significant works of non-fiction (also excluding poetry and drama) published since 1945. In a small, selective and utterly subjective way, they represent something of what has happened in the world - and in the heads of its citizens - since the hot war turned cold. They express (of course) an English speaker's language bias. From Moscow or Madras (even from Manhattan) the view would look different. And, for several crucial genres, one book has to stand for many others, equally definitive.

I include a couple of collections of work written before 1945, but which only reached a general audience in later editions. But I omit so-called "influential" writings by bullies in power whose readers had precious little choice: so no *Little Red Book*, even though Mao Tse-tung had 750 million copies printed during his catastrophic tyranny. Right or wrong, a bone or a blessing, the choices also rest on a firm foundation of fact or argument; so no New Age vapourings, either. If you wish to complain, please do. That's the point. I accept in advance every charge of partiality or oversight you may wish to hurl. But remember that one big casualty of late 20th-century thought - across a broad range of disciplines - has been the very notion of the disinterested observer.

What does a list like this overlook? The printed book has yielded some ground to other media. In the late 1890s, the equivalent list would no doubt have found a special place for *The Origin of Species* - not just a landmark in human thought, but a compelling read as well. But the transmission of Big Ideas has changed since Darwin's time. You could argue that no single figure has shaped late-20th-century lives more than Alan Turing. In deciphering the Nazis' Enigma codes, he helped the free mind to survive: in his work on electronic computation, he sketched a blueprint for the machines that now run our world. Yet to cite Turing's *Collected Papers* in an exercise like this would be a silly bit of posturing. In an age of fragmented expertise, popularisation - itself a subtle skill - creates the necessary link between specialist and public. Turing's ideas loom large behind the work of Roger Penrose, which I do mention here.

Something else has shifted since the last century. Some of the cultural forms that people cherish most have failed to find a proper echo in the pages of the book. Think of film, television or popular music. Nothing in the forests of critique and analysis can match the sheer force of the originals. Those arts demand their own lists - but that's another story for another, pre-millennial morning.

1 Karl Popper: *The Open Society and its Enemies* (1945)
A decisive early shot in the Cold War of the mind, as the polymath philosopher assaulted total thought-systems and their creators - from Plato up to Marx - as the worst foes of freedom.

2 Benjamin Spock: *Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care* (1946)
As the West's postwar baby-boom got under way, the Bible of parental indulgence arrived on cue to dethrone medical authority and help cosset the most privileged generation in history.

3 Anne Frank: *Diary of a Young Girl* (1947)
The world's attempts to grasp the Holocaust have never ceased since the death-camp gates first opened. From the secreted Amsterdam

teenager to the workforce of Oskar Schindler, personal accounts have focused the overwhelming facts.

4 Antonio Gramsci: *Prison Notebooks* (1947)
As he slowly rotted in Mussolini's jails, the Italian Communist leader planned a more democratic, flexible future for socialism in a plural society. His vision spurred a half-century of reform on the left.

5 Simone de Beauvoir: *The Second Sex* (1949)
For centuries to come, the large-scale entry of women into the public realm will count as a defining breakthrough of the post-war years. This huge critique of inequality prepared the ground, but met with scorn from most "progressive" men.

6 Elizabeth David: *Mediterranean Food* (1950)
As people in the West got richer, their tastes grew nostalgically simpler: this prophetic of peasant virtues helped bring Nature back into the bourgeois home.

7 Albert Camus: *The Rebel* (1951)
Breaking with socialism (and with Sartre), the Existential maverick led two generations towards a bleak freedom that promised no salvation but offered only its own reward.

8 Ludwig Wittgenstein: *Philosophical Investigations* (1953)
No method, no guru, no plan: the gnomic thinker's jottings paved the way for a horde of anti-theoretical theorists across the human sciences. Life - and thought - became a game whose rules might change at any time.

9 Claude Lévi-Strauss: *Tristes Tropiques* (1955)
Slowly, the West learned to understand the "Third World" in a post-imperial framework: this great anthropologist's testament proved a landmark on that road.

10 Roland Barthes: *Mythologies* (1957)
Meanwhile, at home, the new mass media forged its own exotic culture, and a quizzical Parisian aesthete opened the floodgates of study and analysis.

11 JK Galbraith: *The Affluent Society* (1958)
Market-led prosperity (for those who enjoyed it) often led to more disquiet than satisfaction: and a liberal US economist diagnosed the emerging divide between private wealth and public squalor.

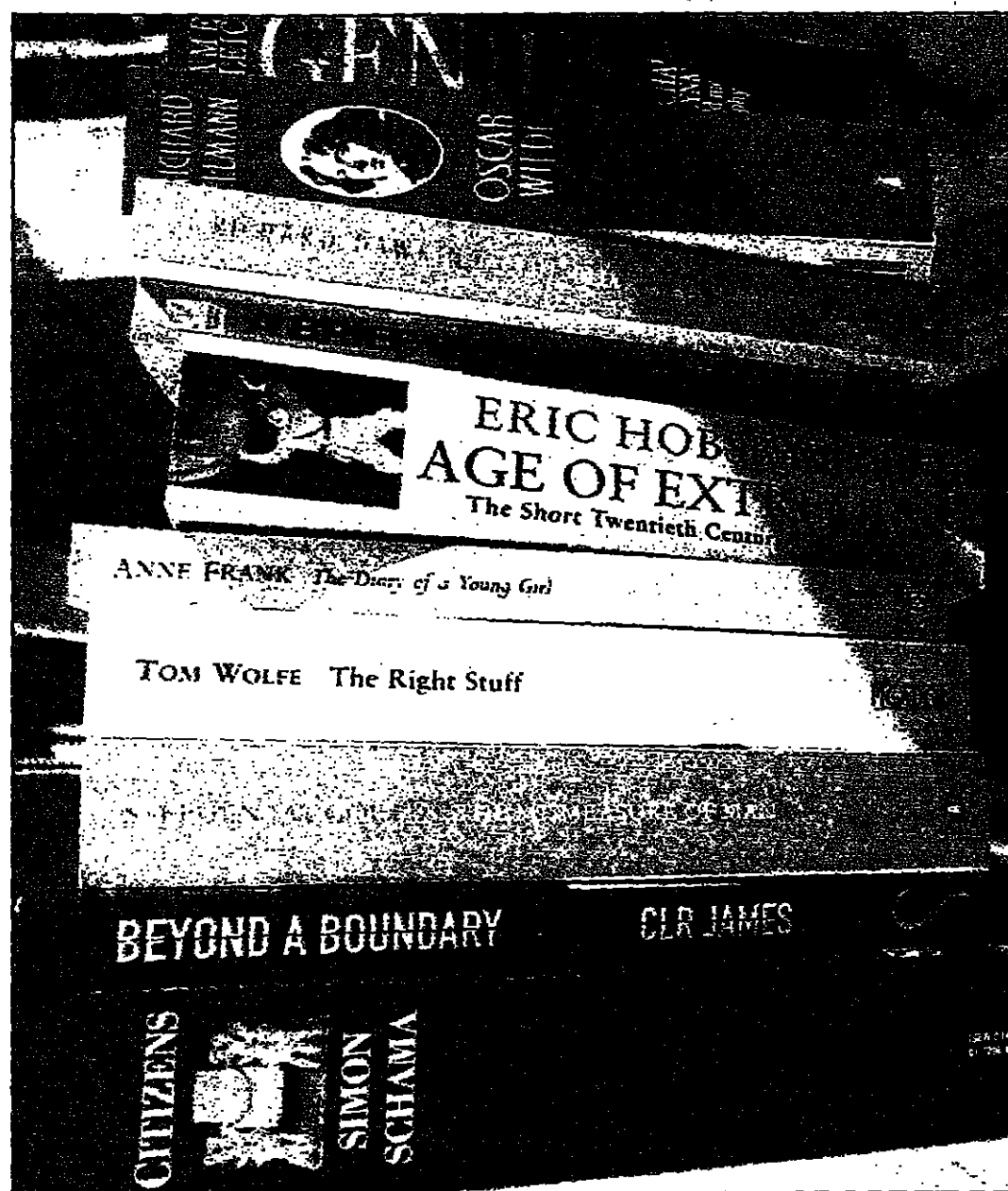
12 Melanie Klein: *The Psychoanalysis of Children* (1960)
To troubled families, childhood could seem a darker continent than ever (and one often threatened by adult invaders). Freud's children - literally, in Anna's case - turned their attention from the couch to the play-pan.

13 Hannah Arendt: *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (1961)
As a captured Nazi faced an Israeli court (and then the noose), this leading émigré thinker took a break from high theory to pinpoint the banality of Europe's evil.

14 Walter Benjamin: *Illuminations* (1961)
A Weimar German friend of Arendt, dead in his flight from Hitler by 1940; but his posthumously read essays opened a new chapter in the study of modern culture.

15 Frantz Fanon: *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961)
As liberation movements stirred around the ex-colonial globe, they turned to this black French psychiatrist for a grasp of the harm that injustice inflicted on soul as well as body.

16 Michel Foucault: *Madness and Civilisation* (1961)
The austere archaeologist of thought went on to transform



ideas about Western philosophy, punishment and sexuality, but this study of the mental asylum's birth helped to hasten its death.

17 Rachel Carson: *Silent Spring* (1962)
A case of being right too early: this prophetic warning of environmental disaster went underground in years of greed, but survived to shape Green activism.

18 Milton Friedman: *Capitalism and Freedom* (1962)
As the left hogged all the intellectual limelight, a free-market reaction was slowly brewing. Twenty years on, it would come to an explosive boil.

19 James Baldwin: *The Fire Next Time* (1963)
These essays from a leading novelist, on the eve of the Black Power era, capture the impatience at broken promises and enduring slights that exposed the flaws in the liberal politics of race.

20 BRILLIANT BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

To mark World Book Day, 10.5 million school students under the age of 18 will this week receive a £1 voucher. But if you don't already know your way around the children's shelves in the bookshop, where should new readers (or parents) begin?

Nicholas Tucker, children's literature specialist at Sussex University, selects his personal Top Tens for younger and older age-groups.

Primary
Janet and Allan Ahlberg: *The Jolly Postman*
An ingenious picture-story, full of jokes, containing real letters in real envelopes.

Anthony Browne: *Gorilla*
An unforgettable picture book, full of half-hidden meanings becoming clearer at each reading.

Roald Dahl: *The Magic Finger*
A lesser-known but very satisfying story, leaving plenty to talk about.

Grimm's *Fairy Tales*
Any edition will do: this must be the best collection of stories ever.

Ted Hughes: *The Iron Man*
A story with the excitement, occasional moments of fear and the final resolution of a traditional fairy tale.

Clive King: *Sig of the Dump*
The best story about an imaginary friend and all the adventures that follow.

Beatrix Potter: *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*
Simply the best short story ever written for children.

EB White: *Charlotte's Web*
A magical story about living and dying which children have always taken to.

Secondary
Joan Aiken: *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase*
A story that never lets up on excitement, written by a master of her craft.

Nina Bayden: *Carrie's War*
War evacuees in Wales watch and listen to everything going on around them. A marvellous novel.

Anne Fine: *Madame Doubtfire*
A hundred times better than the film, this book is very funny, sometimes a little sad, and always rings true.

Alan Garner: *The Owl Service*
A masterfully written, powerful story that grows to a terrific climax.

Gene Kemp: *The Turbulent Term of Tyke Tyler*
A warm, noisy story, with the best final punch-lines in all children's literature.

Margaret Mahy: *The Haunting*
A wonderful novelist, whose ghosts always contain a psychological truth.

Philippa Pearce: *Tom's Midnight Garden*
A story to compare with any classic from the past, this is beautifully written and utterly gripping.

Robert Louis Stevenson: *Treasure Island*
The best adventure story ever, with no sign of fading.

Jill Paton Walsh: *The Dolphin Crossing*
A fast-moving, subtle and exhilarating story based on the Dunkirk rescue during the last war.

26 Maya Angelou: *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1969)
As ideals clash, experience assumes a new authority - especially the experience of the insulted and injured (such as a dirt-poor, abused black girl from the South). The "wretched of the earth" now spoke in their own voices, not via political proxies.

27 Germaine Greer: *The Female Eunuch* (1970)
Women's liberation enters its most active phase with a fiery yet erudite blend of culture and psychology, as old scholarship and new subversiveness combine.

28 Alex Comfort: *The Joy of Sex* (1972)
As the East waved Mao's thoughts, the West fingered its favourite little handbook to the libidinal economy: a "gourmet guide" that assimilated desire into consumption.

29 Ernst Schumacher: *Small is Beautiful* (1973)
The costs of consumerism grew more visible, and eco-politics tried to shed what most of the world's people never had anyway. Here, the doctrine of sustainability found its theologian.

30 Alexander Solzhenitsyn: *The Gulag Archipelago, 1918-1956* (1973)
Telling truths about the barbarous past accelerated the collapse of Stalinism as dogma and system. This epic of moral accountability gave the process a huge shove.

31 Primo Levi: *The Periodic Table* (1975)
Not just the most artful of Auschwitz survivors, but a witness who found in the consoling patterns of science a respite from man's cruelties - even though suicide claimed him in the end.

32 Noam Chomsky: *Reflections on Language* (1976)
Wearing his scientific hat, the lifelong anarchist (and tireless foe of US foreign policy) endowed us with huge innate gifts of linguistic invention: we're all born free, and hard-wired for creativity.

33 Edward Said: *Orientalism* (1977)
With an eye on his own people's tragedy, the Palestinian scholar showed how the West had systematically got the East wrong, and so fixed the tone for post-colonial intellectuals everywhere.

34 Willy Brandt (chairman): *North-South: a blueprint for survival* (1980)
As tensions between the rich and poor worlds rose into a constant fever, the German leader sought to balance the demands of the deprived against the selfish inertia of the haves.

35 Tom Wolfe: *The Right Stuff* (1980)
A savagely shrewd and witty journalist (one mythic figure of the post-war years) turns his gaze on another myth: the heroism of space travel, which beguiled the entire planet and then fell out of the public orbit.

36 Stephen Jay Gould: *The Mismeasure of Man* (1981)
As science grew more specialised, some of its stars fought to keep open its channels to liberal democracy - as in this attack on the abuses of IQ and other quantifying methods.

37 V S Naipaul: *Among the Believers* (1981)
Thoughtful travel-writing boomed along with affordable long-haul flights; cultural identity frayed; and Islam staged its surprising resurgence. The nomadic Trinidadian-Indian-Englishman covered all these bases.

38 Richard Dawkins: *The Blind Watchmaker* (1986)
Triumphant neo-Darwinist manifestos didn't come more ruthless or eloquent than this. So the fierce "anti-humanism" that Parisian Marxists had dreamed of in 1968 arrived, courtesy of Anglo-Saxon zoologists.

39 Allan Bloom: *The Closing of the American Mind* (1987)
The rightward turn in politics sought its liberal-bashing prophets, and this one spawned a generation of rhetorical attacks on multiculturalism, "dumbing down", and so on.

40 Richard Ellmann: *Oscar Wilde* (1987)
A golden age for literary biography saw certain figures acquire more resonance in death than they ever had in life: 100 years on, this one turned from scandal into sage.

41 Jean Baudrillard: *America* (1988)
He had seen the future, and it shopped. Like its subject, this typical collage from a PoMo guru managed to be both very profound and totally superficial, all at once.

42 Stephen Hawking: *A Brief History of Time* (1988)
As the humanities seemed to implode into relativism, big-picture cosmology fed a hunger for enduring truth. This black-hole specialist revived the Newtonian model of the Great Mind scanning the heavens from its (wheel)chair.

43 David Harvey: *The Condition of Postmodernity* (1989)
Spanning culture and economics, this remarkable synthesis argued that, behind the jargon, our reality truly has altered. An important breakthrough from a geographer.

44 Roger Penrose: *The Emperor's New Mind* (1989)
As micro-computing transformed everyday life, its intellectual fallout spread over a vast area - for instance, into the brain-computer metaphor that drives this provocative model of how the mind developed.

45 Simon Schama: *Citizens* (1989)
Narrative history revived, but so did discontent with liberal pieties about the past. This chronicle of the French Revolution pooped the 200th-anniversary party by asking whether the gains were really worth the pain.

46 Jung Chang: *Wild Swans* (1992)
Individual stories, not rival theories, taught the world how state communism failed - as in this blockbuster tale of the women of a storm-tossed Chinese dynasty.

47 Francis Fukuyama: *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992)
In the wake of Soviet collapse, the "unipolar" globe needed an overarching theory: this smooth-even smug - paean of praise to market liberalism drew a line in the sands of ideology.

48 James Gleick: *Genius: Richard Feynman and modern Physics* (1992)
An object lesson in high-level popular science, this biography brought the famously wayward mind behind the new quantum thinking into focus, and showed that the odd wacky maverick could still change the world.

49 Eric Hobsbawm: *Age of Extremes: the short 20th century, 1914-1991* (1994)
The *fin de siècle* summings-up began to multiply, but none managed the mordant eloquence of the radical historian who had been there, done that - and could recall the placards in Berlin announcing Hitler's ascent.

50 Angela Carter: *Shaking a Leg* (1997)
A bit of a cheat, since these essays on culture and society first appeared from the Sixties to the Eighties; together, they prove that the despised press could breed the best in post-war thinking and writing; and that, in an age of woody fantasy, witty rationality could still prevail.

If you feel you could suggest a better list of 50 non-fiction books, write to Boyd Tonkin at *The Independent*, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 3DL. A crate of champagne for the best selection.

Are you sitting comfortably? Then we'll begin...

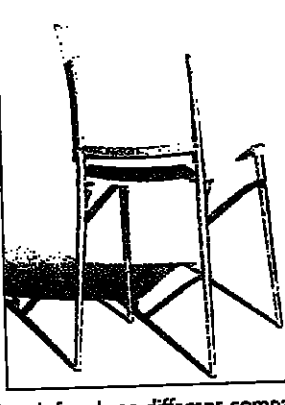
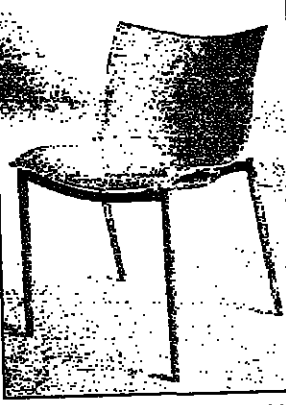
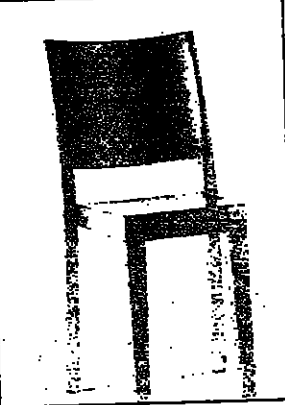
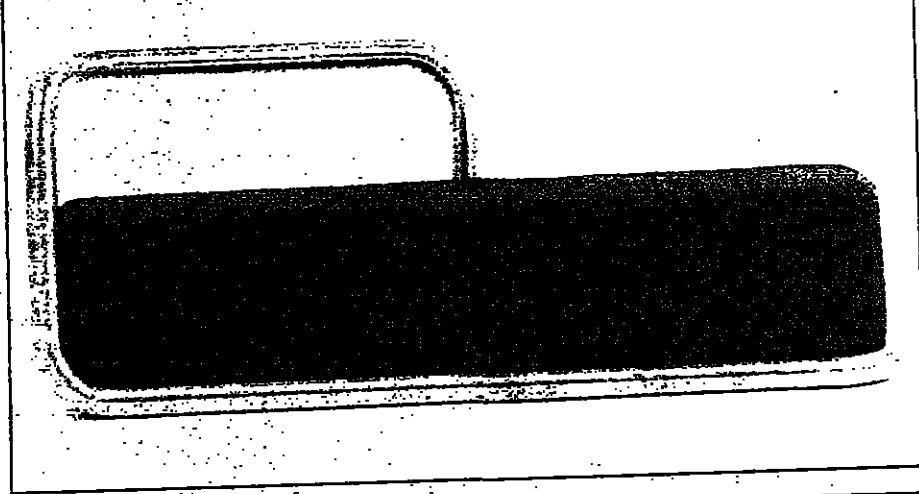
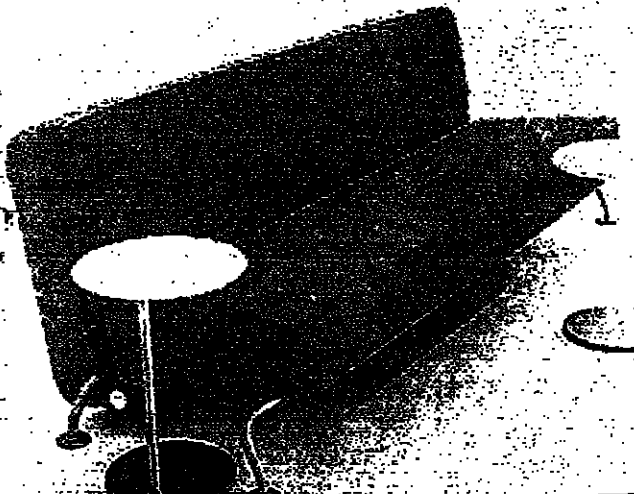
THE Milan furniture fair is a hothouse for international designer label talent. That's because, unlike shown at the Salone del Mobile comes with Attitude, like its designers. The talk of the fair this year was the return of applied arts. Not since William Morris at the turn of the century have we seen such a lot of hand-crafted patterned colour in the home. Even machined mass-production is picking up on hand finishes. It all began with Droog, the Dutch design company who showed us first at Milan five years ago vases made of felt, a knotted string chair and a rather peppy felt washbowl stitched like something from Silence of the Lambs. Furniture as art has been around as long as Marcel Duchamp, but nobody ever thought Droog would make it into mainstream design and from there, into our homes. Now firms like Rosenthal are putting into production some of its pieces.

Plastering soldiers' camouflage uniforms all over furniture and soft furnishings, architect Alessandro Mendini subversively showed us in a tent that decoration is nothing but camouflage. Even Philippe Starck, covered his capacious new sofa for Cassina in red rose fabric, albeit wrong idea to give it shabby chic. Models of sofas and chairs stood about on shapely aluminium or wooden legs shod with aluminium heels or else loved down the catwalks on rollerblades, voluptuous curves and vivid colours on modular pieces pushed together like hotel foyer furniture to make interesting configurations.

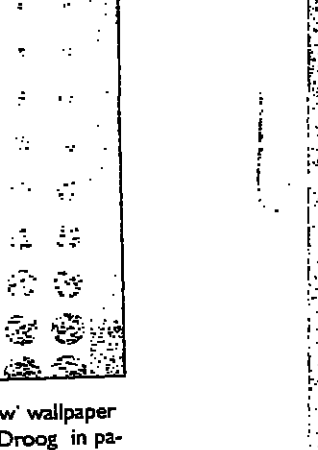
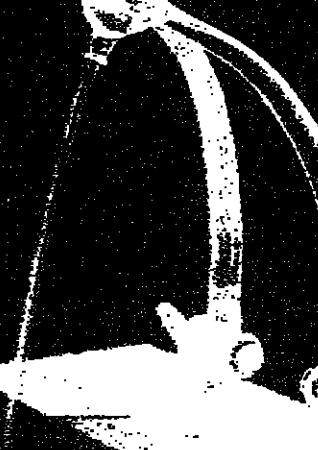
To pass the style trial for the 21st century, Lord Irvine needs to pattern over the Pugin with Droog Design's new wallpaper punched with more holes than a Gruyere cheese. Felt strip chairs, rubber washbasins, glass taps that light up everything is based on industrial materials, sometimes recycled, always with a bit of hand-raffing even on factory made pieces. Like the nipped handle on a porcelain teapot made by Rosenthal, William Morris would understand this mix of industry with arts and crafts, if not the reason.



Architect Alessandro Mendini, who designed the Swatch watch shops, mixes different camouflage patterns from military uniforms around the world on everyday objects. Then with Prospero Rasulo he puts the chairs and tables, shelves and rugs and lampshades inside an Italian Red Cross tent. "The result is a project for peace," Mendini argues. Military camouflage which stems from the need to hide and disappear into nature is inspired by some of the loveliest landscapes. Verner Panton's 1969 sinuous S bend chair made by Vitra (above) loses its identity beside the other camouflaged everyday objects. Reversing what he calls "the cruel sense of military camouflage" Mendini labels the collection eco-chic.



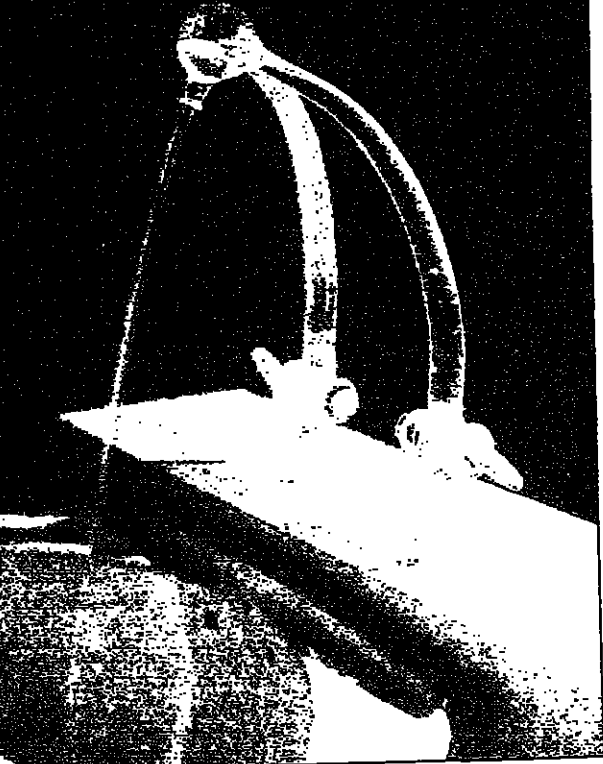
Starck Clones...Three new chairs launched at the Milan Fair, all by Starck for three different companies have a certain Starckness of silhouette. From left: Starck for Kartell opening their own shop inside Selfridges in September; 'Chameleon' for Diade at Viaduct Tel 278 8456; 'Miss C.O.C.O.' for Cassina at Co-Existence 0171 354 8817.



Brit-Design staged by the British Council at its HQ in Milan showed prototypes by students from Buckingham College, Mo-billy, a play on the Italian for furniture, mobile, was curated by Habitat's head of design, Tom Dixon. His 'Jack' light which doubles as a stool is made from traffic bollard material mixed with a phosphorescent pigment. Asked on Italian TV where Cool Britannia was going, Dixon unclipped his milk and replied "Dunno. But I'm going home". The object of the student project wasn't to find a home for the prototypes so much as to "raise the profile of British design" says British Council director in Milan, Gill Caldwell. In truth, British designers conquered Milan in the eighties, building up long term relationships with manufacturers. This year Sheridan Coakley from SCP Designs launched a collection of British designer furniture with Scottish Bute fabrics in fashionable bobby boucle wools, available at SCP; tel 739 1869.

The best of British design from Milan, top row left to right: James Irvine's sofa-bed for B & B Italia flattens as easily as moving the handle in the middle.

Tom Dixon 'Hoop' chaise longue for SCP in Bute fabric £3090
2nd row left to right: Ross Lovegrove's 'Bluebell' chair for Diade from Viaduct Tel 278 8456
Michael Young's MY 68 chair for Sawaya & Moroni in Milan Tel 02 86395
Jasper Morrison 'Pharmacy' chair upholstered in Bute fabrics designed for the restaurant and made by SCP for £54
Matthew Hilton's 'Mercury' sofa for Diade at Viaduct.



Above: 'Peepshow' wallpaper by Gjis Baker for Droog in paper rolls of 500 x 70 cms is polka-dotted with holes of different circumference. Contact Droog Design Foundation in Amsterdam Fax 31 20 638 88 28
Left: Droog's dd 49 glass taps by Arnout Visser. The temperature of the water is made visible by coloured light.

...a funny, insightful and clever film with some fabulous one-liners"

GWYNETH PALTROW
What if one split second sent your life in two completely different directions?

Helen is about to find out that romance was never this much fun.



'The quality of light is more important than the fitting'
Sir Norman Foster

"Any engineer can quantify and produce enough light to brighten up a passage or to read a book. But what about the poetic dimensions of light? The changing nature of an overcast sky, the discovery of shade, the lightness of a patch of sunlight?" Norman Foster asks.
Ra lighting system by Norman Foster for Artemide is enough to make the sun god blink. Rather obtrusively bolted onto the ceiling like an overhead sun-bed, it can be installed less obtrusively in a false ceiling. It addresses

Artemide's expressed aim to produce a light that adapts to the various needs of people, a light that like daylight changes levels and maintains the spectrum of tones and nuances of natural illumination.
It's a thoroughly architectural installation. Norman Foster explains that he wants offices to be more like home and home to be more like the office.
By controlling the quality of the light he hopes to bring about this change in the working environment.

"A funny, insightful and clever film with some fabulous one-liners"



Romance was never this much fun...at the same time.
Helen is about to live both of them.
There are two sides to every story.

SLIDING DOORS

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SOUNDTRACK BY JAMES NEWTON HOWARD
COSTUME DESIGNER: JILL LINDVALL
HAIR: JILL LINDVALL
MAKEUP: JILL LINDVALL
PRODUCTION DESIGNER: JILL LINDVALL
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: JILL LINDVALL AND JEFFREY SMITH
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DOORS OPEN MAY 1st

GWYNETH PALTROW

Getting sweaty over exercising advice

WHEN we go to the doctor's these days we often find ourselves in a cleft stick. Part of us knows that every bit of advice they give us is liable to be overturned by some new piece of research produced by some poly-turned-university the following day; we no longer trust our doctor's advice. In other words, and freely chuck down too many of his pills, or drink alcohol with anti-biotics or tranquillisers, or chuck his prescription in the wastepaper basket, knowing that nothing very desperate is likely to happen to us. But part of us also sees the doctor as a god. So when he puts his fingers together and says: "Hm, how much do you really drink? Smoke? Exercise?" we feel like naughty schoolchildren, and go home feeling, like Dani, full of guilt and confusion. She "should" exercise. Who knows what might happen to her in her old age if she doesn't? She might seize up and pack up like a rusty, unused old car.

The passion for exercise is one that has not been with us long. Victorian ladies were never told to exercise except for a bit of leisurely walking from one end of the large country house to the other. There is no question that it improves muscle-tone, circulation and so on. But so what? And have people looked enough at the disadvantages of exercise? The jog-deaths, the syndrome that means that if you run on pavements you splinter your bones or something, or grind away your kneecaps. I know a couple of exercisers who now can barely walk because they have

Although she is healthy, on hearing she has a sedentary job Dani's doctor told her she should work out more. She hates the idea. What should she do?

DILEMMAS



VIRGINIA IRONSIDE

quite literally run themselves into the ground.

The latest advice is that brisk walking is the best, but soon someone will come up with a good reason to avoid that.

Dani's perfectly fit and well. My own feeling is that if there's nothing wrong with her it's best to leave well alone. Even if she scores heroin every night, drinks a bottle of whisky and smokes forty a day, if she's fit and well, then why mess around with the status quo? Like everyone I've tried swimming, jogging, yoga, gym, aerobics and the works; even, once, to my utter shame and embarrassment, a personal trainer, so enslaved was I to the idea that exercise does you good. And where did it

get me? Nowhere. I felt just as grotty and sluggish as I did the day I started. Those endorphins that I'd been promised simply failed to materialise.

Far from producing endorphins I produced only chemicals that resulted in rage, misery, cold, irritation and exhaustion, not to mention a considerably lighter purse. Not for me the pleasant after-glow of the work-out. Like Dani, I guess I'm just not an exercise person.

I read a lovely piece of research recently (probably from another of the aforementioned establishments) that said that a doctor had done trials on medical students. One group he asked to exercise their little fingers daily; the other he asked to imagine exercising them. The result was that the exercising lot developed 30 per cent more strength in the little fingers, but the non-exercising lot still developed 10 per cent.

My advice to Dani, if she wants to get fit, is to keep on dreaming. Imagine running up and down mountains, along rivers, pounding under fresh waterfalls, speeding over lush meadows, on and on. It'll probably do her no end of good. The only problem is that she may visualise her kneecaps into non-existence as well.

However, I do recognise the importance of exercise and for this reason, despite owning a car, I have cycled to work now for twenty years. If this is a feasible option, then I would recommend Dani to do likewise.

Eric Fitch, Bucks.

Like Dani I don't like exercise for the sake of it, but I think I keep fit simply by walking everywhere - to the shops, to work etc. Using a brisk pace one feels much fresher after a walk than a drive.

Lee Gordon

The problem is the doctor's, not Dani's. Dani should follow good American advice: if it ain't bust, don't fix it. When healthy people take exercise their metabolism leads them to take more; since this is clearly not on Dani's agenda, I would say don't bother. So, the advice for Dani is to go on as now: it obviously works. However, there might be one small experiment worth trying. This is to go upstairs, if and when necessary, two at a time instead of one. It could combine possibly enhanced feelings of good health with satisfaction at reducing by half the time spent on unavoidable exercise.

John Pelling

Letters are welcome, and everyone who has a suggestion quoted will be sent a bouquet from *Interiors*. Send comments and suggestions to *Virginia Ironside at the Features Department, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL* (fax 0171-293 2182), by Tuesday morning. If you have a dilemma of your own that you would like to share, please let me know.

Interiors

READERS REPLIES

I think Dani has not appreciated the true extent of her dilemma. She should go back to her doctor and ask what the relative risks are of her continuing the current lifestyle and of changing it in the way suggested. Only then will she have the necessary information for calculating a solution. The calculation can also include her own values and attitudes. She might also bear in mind that her doctor's definitions of "perfectly healthy" and "fit" might be different from hers.

Her doctor might be a particularly old-fashioned, authoritarian, paternalistic type, but most of us today present our patients with choices and leave them to make a decision that fits with their own hopes and aspirations for quality and length of life.

Dr A R Cadamy

Along with Dani, I too am middle-aged, hate exercise and in addition have no interest in sport whatsoever.

NEXT WEEK'S DILEMMA

Dear Virginia, I'm 46 and have decided to apply for a new job, but I have met with brick walls everywhere. It seems it is because of my age. Have other people experienced ageism at work? And do you think it would be a good idea to lie about my age on any other CVs I write? I look quite young.

Yours, Kate

Crimes...and punishment

An uncertain future faces Dr Ian Oliver, a chief constable who got into one scrap too many. Jason Bennetto traces his rise to power and his sudden fall

EIGHT years ago, when Ian Oliver was awarded the top post at Grampian police force in north-east Scotland, his brilliant career was in full swing. Already a chief constable at the age of 39, he looked set to pick up one of the country's most prestigious policing jobs: he had been tipped as a future Commissioner of the Metropolitan force in London.

Intelligent - he has PhDs in law and public administration - ambitious, and media friendly, he seemed to have all the necessary ingredients for success. But in the past two years his apparently unstoppable march forward has faltered, stumbled, and this week finally collapsed after both his police board and the Secretary of State for Scotland called for his resignation following a highly critical report into the handling of a child murder inquiry.

On Tuesday the Scottish councillors who make up the police selection board turned down Dr Oliver's offer to bring forward his early retirement and step down immediately. Instead they plan to use disciplinary procedures to force him to retire at a meeting a week tomorrow. In an unprecedented and very public row, both sides are refusing to back down in what has become a personal battle of wills.

His growing number of critics believe he was an arrogant egotist who over-reached himself and finally self-destructed.

Dr Oliver, 58, believes he is the victim of jealous and scheming politicians who wanted him out of the way because he had become troublesome and posed a stumbling block to their greater ambitions.

Whatever the truth, he has shown an unshakable belief in himself along with a skin an elephant would envy. Throughout his decline, whether it was allegations of sexual impropriety, dereliction of duty or plain incompetence, he has given the impression that his accusers were irritants barely worthy of his attention.

A police insider commented: "He's outspoken and a maverick. He's extremely intelligent and never backs down - it's this arrogance that has caused his downfall."

What took his various run-ins into a new league was the spectacular war of words he has waged in the past few months with the two most powerful politicians in Scotland, culminating in Donald Dewar, the Secretary of State, telling Dr Oliver on Monday to "pack his bags and go now".

Born in west London in 1940, he followed his father, a Metropolitan police constable whose bravery and dedication were recognised with a George Medal, into the job. At 21 he joined the Met, and the year before his promotion to sergeant in 1965, he married Elsie Chalmers, a police constable. While at the Met he was awarded a scholarship which enabled him to take a law degree and later a PhD. He rapidly scaled the ranks, becoming a superintendent by 1976, a chief superintendent a year later with Northumbria constabulary, and assistant chief constable the following year.

He gets frustrated with his work - his ideal job is probably a professor of criminology at Harvard University," an insider said.

His first real setback came in August 1996 when he failed to be short-listed for chief constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary. Rather than accept the decision, he wrote to Sir Patrick Mayhew, the then Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, demanding an explanation. It later emerged that the reason for his exclusion was because he had not completed a senior command

handling of the case by social services was published. He also said Grampian's internal inquiry into the murder was inadequate and ordered another chief constable to conduct an independent investigation. Dr Oliver retaliated by accusing Mr McLeish of making "intemperate" comments.

His reputation suffered a very different blow in February when the *Sun* newspaper published a photograph of the chief constable kissing a 26-year-old married mother of two. The week following the publication of the photograph Dr Oliver stayed inside his home, virtually under siege from the reporters and camera crews.

But the most damaging episode was to come earlier this week, with the publication of an independent report into Grampian's handling of the Scott Simpson case. Far from supporting Dr Oliver's claim that his force had done nothing wrong, it listed a catalogue of incompetence, compounded by lack of leadership. It said a subsequent internal inquiry seemed to be aimed at covering up the truth.

Donald Dewar suggested Mr Oliver should "pack his bags". The Secretary of State has consistently used the title of "Mr", rather than the preferred "Dr", to the irritation of the chief constable who believes it is a deliberate slight.

Dr Oliver believes part of Mr Dewar's desire to see him go is because he is viewed as an opponent of Mr Dewar's plans for a reformed Scottish police system, possibly leading to a national force. This theory was given added weight by the announcement yesterday by Mr Dewar of a root and branch review of the structure of Scotland's eight police forces.

The police chief's lack of tact and "respect" in dealing with the 15-strong Grampian police board also appears to have seriously back-fired and it seems it will take a miracle - or some extraordinary persuasion - to save his police career next Friday. But as a source at the board said the board members are not in a mood for reconciliation. They are not interested in doing any "deals", he said. "It has become more of a matter of punishment."

His growing number of critics believe he's an arrogant egotist who over-reached and finally self-destructed

By the time he was 39, Oliver had been promoted to chief constable of Central Scotland - the youngest to reach that rank in Scotland.

He found it hard to hide his disdain for running such a small force and in 1990 was lured to the top job at Grampian police by the chance of overseeing such high-profile assignments as security for the Royal Family at Balmoral and policing North Sea oil rigs.

But despite his vision and intellect, at Grampian he started to develop a reputation for being aloof and unwilling to go along with all the usual niceties of being a chief constable. At meetings he has been known to pick up a newspaper, or stare out the window, as soon as he had finished his business.

It was also while he was at Grampian that he converted to evangelical Christianity at a Billy Graham rally. He became known for his outspoken

course. Rejection number two came in the form of the hotly-contested post of Britain's first "drugs tsar", which went to fellow chief constable, Keith Hellawell.

Skirmishes with politicians began with Alex Salmond, the Scottish Nationalist Party leader, who called for Dr Oliver's resignation when, in the wake of the Dunblane tragedy, he said a ban on handguns would be unworkable.

But it was his handling of the case of Scott Simpson, the nine-year-old boy killed by the known paedophile, Steven Leisk in July last year in Aberdeen, that was to bring his eventual downfall and a very public slanging match with government ministers.

The first clash came in January when Henry McLeish, Scottish home affairs minister, said he was "astonished and angry" that Dr Oliver was at a conference in Taiwan when a report into the

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17/OBITUARIES

Keith Sword

KEITH SWORD was one of the leading British specialists on contemporary Poland as well as on the history of the Polish diaspora in Britain.

Having completed his PhD thesis in 1982 in Social Anthropology at Sussex University he became a Research Fellow at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, London University, working on the Polish Migration Project. The project, funded by grants from the M.B. Grabowski Fund, the Leverhulme Foundation and the Federation of Poles in Britain, began in 1982 and produced several substantial publications all authored by Sword: *The Formation of the Polish Community in Great Britain 1939-50* (1989), with Jan Ciechanowski and Norman Davies; *Deportation and Exile: Poles in the Soviet Union 1939-1948* (1994); and *Identity in Flux: the Polish community in Britain* (1996).

Since 1995 the project has concentrated on migration after 1989 and has been concerned with cross-border migration, refugees, repatriates and traders. A further book, edited with Krystyna Iglicka-Okolska, will shortly be published: *The Challenge for Poland of East-West Migration* (1998). This most recent research has sadly been cut off at a point where Sword was breaking new ground and creating new models; he used Poland as a means of understanding future phenomena that may well occur along the borders of the expanded European Union.

In September 1995 he was appointed to a permanent position at the School as Lecturer in Sociology. Since 1988 he was responsible for the organisation of several series of Polish seminars which covered almost every aspect of Polish history, politics, society and culture and brought together members of the school with

those of the Polish community who attended regularly.

Keith Sword will be remembered as a scholar who not only occupied himself with minority fields but who was able to relate his studies to the wider field. He was a scholar with a special interest in Poland rather than one whose interests were limited to Poland. Furthermore, he saw clearly how minority, and often neglected, subjects – such as Poland – underpinned our understanding of the larger (Russia, Germany). He produced pioneering research which will be of lasting value not only in Britain but to Polish scholars working in Poland, because he was able to provide the models and the essential comparative context. As an outsider writing in English he possessed an objectivity often lacking in Polish scholarship. He was unemotional and always fair when dealing with emotive Polish issues.

At the same time he was extraordinarily dedicated to the individuals whom he studied and became personally involved with the concerns of the Polish community. His knowledge of Polish history and his fluency in spoken Polish enabled him to cross cultural barriers and understand another's position. They also enabled him to make use of primary sources: as archives in Poland opened up after the fall of Communism, he was fully equipped to exploit them.

Sword was a great interdisciplinary; his first degree had been in English Literature; he was as much a historian as he was a social anthropologist; his approach to Polish history contributed enormously to our understanding of contemporary Polish problems.

Working in a minority field can be an isolating experience. Keith Sword should be remembered for his conscientiousness, courage and commitment. He was not only committed to his work, but to people: he had an old-fashioned sense of duty to others, as was illustrated by the energy he put into his role as secretary of the SSES branch of the Association of University Teachers, and by his dedication both to his subject and to his students and colleagues.

Ursula Phillips

Keith Sword, social anthropologist: born Southampton 26 February 1949; married (one daughter); died Hove, East Sussex 6 April 1998.



Sword: Polish diaspora

Tom Vallance

Charles Bryant Lang, cinematographer: born Bluff, Utah 17 March 1902; died Santa Monica, California 3 April 1998.

Charles Lang

ONE OF Hollywood's finest cameramen, with over 150 features to his credit, Charles Lang became a master of black-and-white photography during the 25 years he was under contract to Paramount, his delicate textures and artful use of light and shadow making him a favourite of leading ladies.

His work was admired by such leading directors as Mitchell Leisen, Billy Wilder and Henry Hathaway, and when he moved into colour he produced such stunningly photographed westerns as *Gunfight at the OK Corral* and *One-Eyed Jacks*. Highly esteemed by his peers, he won the Academy Award in 1932 for *A Farewell to Arms* and was nominated a further 16 times.

Born Charles Bryant Lang in Bluff, Utah, in 1902, he attended Lincoln High School and briefly studied law at the University of Southern California before finding work as a laboratory assistant at the Reelart Studio in 1919, graduating to assistant cameraman on silent movies. In 1922 he moved to Preferred Pictures as a still photographer and the following year joined Paramount as an assistant cameraman. When his first solo work as cameraman, *Ritz* (1925), proved disappointing he returned to working as an assistant while perfecting his craft, and when he photographed *The Shopworn Angel* (1928) and *Innocents of Paris* (1929) the results were impressive enough for the studio to give him a long-term contract as director of photography – he was to stay with them until 1952, after which he freelanced until his final film, *Forty Carats*, in 1973.

Paramount, heavily influenced by their contract directors Ernst Lubitsch and Josef von Sternberg, were considered to have the best photographed films in the industry. Lang worked on several films with director John Cromwell, including *Street of Chance* (1930), *Unfaithful* (1931) and *The Vice Squad* (1931), before his Oscar-winning work on Frank Borzage's *A Farewell to Arms*; its emotional intensity aided immeasurably by the romantic aura imparted by Lang's exquisite translucent lighting.

He became the favourite of female stars and photographed Mae West in *She Done Him Wrong* (1934) and Marlene Dietrich in both Borzage's *Destiny* (1936) and Lubitsch's *An*

gel (1937). His first film for Mitchell Leisen, *Cradle Song* (1933), starred the German actress Dorothea Wieck who the studio hoped might be another Dietrich. "She had a face like Dietrich," said Lang.

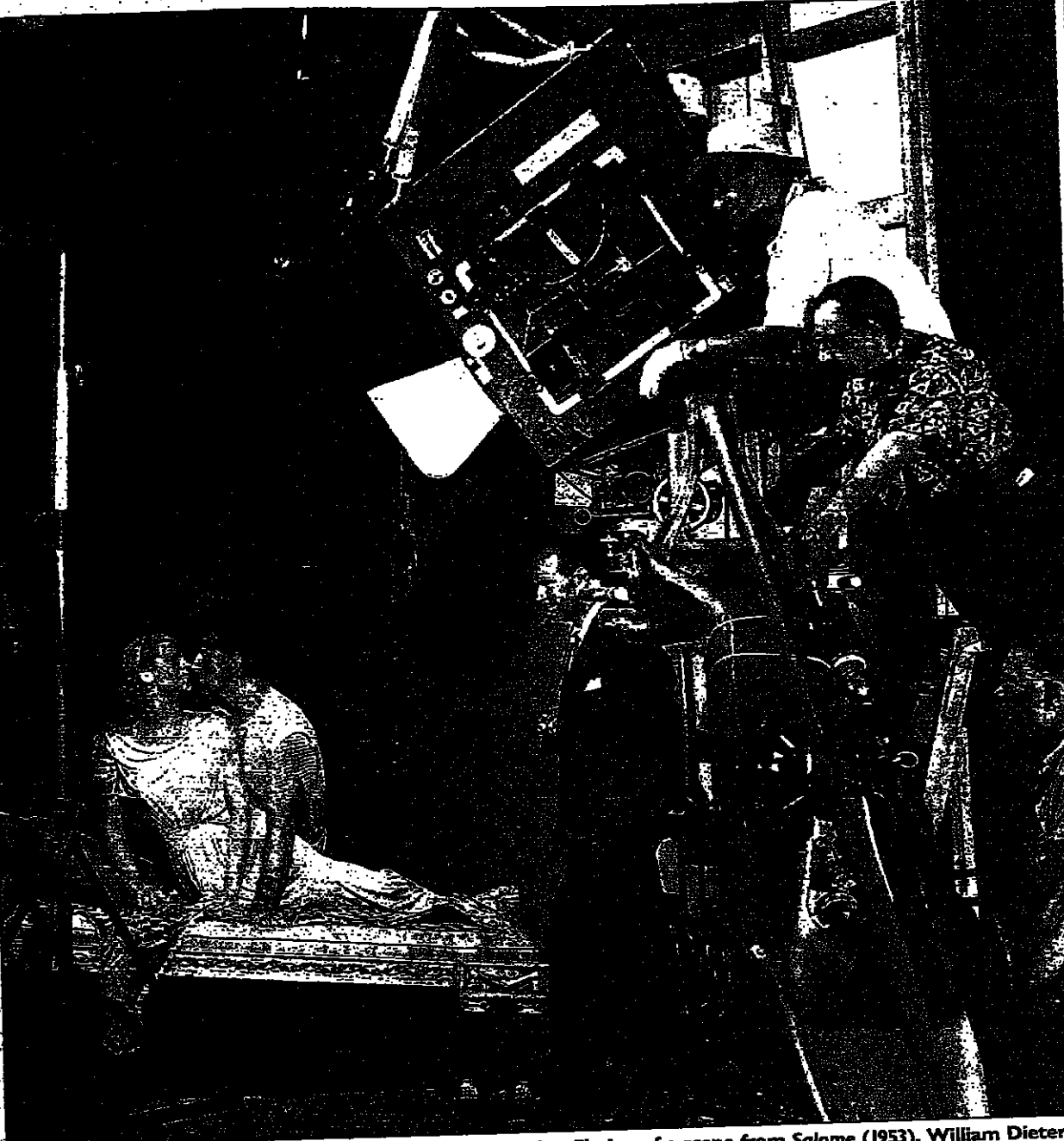
small-boned but with very sharp features. You lit Dietrich with one very high key light, far away and with very little or no fill light, which is what gave that fantastic modelling to her cheekbones and eye sockets. We could have done the same thing with Wieck, but we wanted a softer effect so we used more fill.

Lang and Leisen were to have a rewarding partnership at the studio ("Mitch had definite ideas about what he wanted. He'd tell me what lens to use... the only thing he didn't control was the lighting. He left that to me and always gave me plenty of time to get what I wanted"). Lang became notorious for his slowness in setting up shots, but results were his justification. On Leisen's *Death Takes a Holiday* (1934), a critical and commercial hit based on Maxwell Anderson's stage fantasy in which Death takes on human form for three days to discover why humans fear him so, Lang's lyrical camerawork and Ernst Fegte's beautiful direction produced a visual masterpiece. Fegte was to tell the writer David Chirichetti years later:

Every so often in the heyday times, a group of compatible people got together on a picture and they were so sensitive and aware of each other's talents that it was wonderful. Mitchell and Charles Lang were an unbeatable combination.

Near the start of the film, when a group of aristocrats arrive at their palazzo, Lang's camera pulls back farther and farther for an elaborate crane shot that precedes the group down an enormous corridor for several minutes until they turn to enter a salon. In order to make *Death* (Freddie March) transparent without resorting to laboratory work, Leisen and Lang duplicated pieces of the set in black velvet, put a mirror in front of March that was only 30 per cent silvered so they could shoot through it, then lit up certain portions of the black set which reflected in the mirror superimposed over the actor.

Hathaway's *Peter Ibbotson* (1935) was another fantasy that benefited from the Lang touch, but, like all craftsmen of the era, he was equally fine in all genres, including action films – *Hathaway's Lines of a Bengal Lancer* (1935); *Souls at Sea* (1937) and *Spawn of the North*



Cameraman of choice: Lang, standing under camera, during filming of a scene from *Salome* (1953). William Dieterle, upper right, directs; Rita Hayworth stars as *Salome* opposite Stewart Granger (Claudius)

(1939) – and musicals such as the Bing Crosby vehicles *We're Not Dressing* (1934), *Mississippi* (1935) and *Doctor Rhythm* (1938).

He worked with Leisen for the first time since *Death Takes a Holiday* when Claudette Colbert requested him for *Midnight* (1939), the sparkling comedy written by Billy Wilder and Charles Brackett. Lang was one of the few people in Hollywood who claims that Colbert was right in insisting that only the left side of her face be photographed.

The right side of her face had several problems, including a fairly deep scar on the right side of her mouth... full face could be all right if the light came from the left side, but we didn't do it very often.

Lang photographed Colbert in three more Loisen films, *Arise My Love* (1941), *No Time*

for Love (1943) and *Practically Yours* (1944). The last was a weak comedy co-starring Fred MacMurray, who told Colbert, "There's one thing wrong with this picture – we're both too damned old for it." In order to make Colbert, nearly 40, look suitably juvenile, Lang used a key light above her head at a sharp angle. Generally the sharper the angle the more flattering the light but we had to be careful that the shadow from the nose didn't run into the mouth. Since Claudette has a flat nose, I could place her key light at a sharp angle without worrying about the shadow on her upper lip. Then I filled it in with a broad but much weaker light so there was still that beautiful modelling on her cheeks.

When he started to freelance, Lang's skill was to make him the choice cameraman of several ladies such as Joan Crawford (*Sudden Fear*, *Female on the Beach*, *Queen Bee* and *Autumn Leaves*), Rita Hay-

worth (*Salome*, *Separate Tables*) and Audrey Hepburn, whom he first photographed in Wilder's *Sabrina* (1954). Hepburn developed heavily ringed eyes fairly early in her career, doubtless due to the malnutrition she suffered as a child in Nazi-occupied Holland, and Lang was her cameraman on *Charade* (1963), *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* (1966) and *Wait Until Dark* (1967).

Lang first worked in colour with Hathaway's *Shepherd of the Hills* (1941), filmed in gorgeous pastel shades, and was co-photographer of *Blue Skies* (1946) and the sumptuous melodrama *Desert Fury* (1947). He also adapted well to the harder demands of film noir with his depiction of the arid landscapes of Wilder's *Ac in the Hole* (1951) and the venal suburbia of Lang's *The Big Heat*

Photograph: Kobal

The Rev Professor Norman Whybray

THE DEATH of Norman Whybray has brought to a sudden end the very productive career of one of the senior figures in British Old Testament scholarship. He was already in his forties before his first major scholarly work appeared, but thereafter he managed to write more than 15 scholarly books and numerous articles for which he justly acquired a very high reputation both in Britain and internationally.

Whybray spent over 10 years in Japan, and his first wife was French, but he remained at heart a very English figure. He also remained attached to the standards and values he acquired in his early life, and there were certainly aspects of the



Whybray: wisdom literature

modern world that he found uncomfortable.

Born at East Molesey, Surrey, in 1923, he received his secondary education at Kingston

Grammar School. He was at Keble College, Oxford, during the Second World War, where he read French and then Theology. After ordination training at Lincoln Theological College, he was ordained deacon in the Church of England in 1946, and priest in 1947. He served a curacy at St Michael's, Basingstoke, held teaching posts at General Theological Seminary in New York and at Queen's College, Birmingham, and then in 1952 was appointed Professor of Old Testament and Hebrew at Central Theological College, Tokyo.

While he and his first wife, Hélène, enjoyed their life in Japan, it was no doubt difficult for him in the circumstances in

which he found himself to pursue high-level research, and he returned to Oxford in 1960 for a two-year period to read for a DPhil under Professor Sir Godfrey Driver. The thesis that he prepared was published in 1965 under the title *Wisdom in Proverbs: the concept of wisdom in Proverbs 1-9*, and it was with this publication that he first began to establish his reputation as an Old Testament scholar. He returned permanently to England in 1965 to take up a post as Lecturer in the Department of Theology at Hull University; he was promoted to Reader in 1969 and was appointed Professor of Hebrew and Old Testament Studies in 1978.

Whybray's time at Hull was

a particularly fruitful period of his life. His teaching duties were not onerous, and he was able to devote the greater part of his considerable energy to research. His earlier work on Proverbs was followed by a series of studies on the wisdom literature of the Old Testament, including commentaries on Ecclesiastes (1989) and Proverbs (1994). His book *The Intellectual Tradition in the Old Testament* (1974), which offered a radical critique of the views then current concerning the place of wisdom in Israelite society, was especially influential, and it is probably his work on the wisdom literature that represents his most important contribution to the study of the Old Testament.

He did not neglect other areas. He published a number of studies concerned with Isaiah 40-66, including a major commentary (1975), while in his *The Making of the Pentateuch: a methodological study* (1987) he devoted his attention to a topic that is of considerable interest at present. For his contribution to Old Testament scholarship he was awarded the Burkin Medal by the British Academy in 1997.

Whybray was a pillar of the British Society for Old Testament Study, and he was elected its President for 1982. In that same year he took early retirement and moved to Ely, where he stayed for the remainder of his life. Not the least of the rea-

sons that led him to retire early was a reluctance to take on increased administrative duties and a wish to be able to devote all his time to research. In the latter aim he was successful. He continued to be extremely productive as a scholar, and he also found time to edit the series of Old Testament Guides, which are now widely used and are extremely helpful.

Norman Whybray met Hélène Weill at a Student Christian Movement conference in France shortly after the war, and they married in 1948. Her early death in 1978 and that of their adopted son Peter in 1990 were severe blows which profoundly affected him. But by chance he was to meet again

Michael Knibb

Roger Norman Whybray, priest and Old Testament scholar: born East Molesey, Surrey 26 July 1923; ordained deacon 1946, priest 1947; Professor of Old Testament and Hebrew, Central Theological Seminary, Tokyo 1952-65; Lecturer in Theology, Hull University 1965-69; Reader in Theology, 1969-78; Professor of Hebrew and Old Testament Studies 1978-82; married 1948 Hélène Weill (died 1978; one adopted son deceased), 1979 Mary Carmack; died Salisbury, Wiltshire 15 April 1998.

LAW REPORT: 23 APRIL 1998
Sentences passed separately will be aggregated

Regina v Secretary of State for the Home Department and another, ex parte François House of Lords (Lord Browne-Wilkinson, Lord Slynn of Hadley, Lord Nolan, Lord Hope of Craighead, Lord Hutton) 12 March 1998

WHEN calculating a prisoner's non-parole release date under section 33 of the Criminal Justice Act 1991, consecutive sentences imposed on different occasions were to be aggregated.

The House of Lords dismissed the appellant's appeal against the dismissal by the Divisional Court (Law Report, 17 April 1997) of his application for judicial review, challenging the prison authorities' calculation of his release date.

The appellant had been sentenced on 5 August 1993 to a total of 19 months' imprisonment. On 7 January 1994 a different court had sentenced him

to a total sentence of four years' imprisonment, consecutive to the sentence of 19 months.

Section 33(1) of the Criminal Justice Act 1991 provided that it was the duty of the Home Secretary to release on licence a short-term prisoner, sentenced to a term of 12 months or more, as soon as he had served half his sentence, and to release on licence a long-term prisoner as soon as he had served two-thirds of his sentence. Section 33(5) provided that a serving prisoner was one serving a sentence of four years or more, and a short-term prisoner was one serving a sentence of less than four years.

Section 51(2) of the Act provided that for the purposes of any reference in that Part of the Act to a term of imprisonment, consecutive terms and terms which were wholly or partly

concurrent should be treated as a single term.

Adrian Fulford QC and Martin Soorjoo (instructed by Breeze Benton & Co) for the appellant; **Nigel Fleming QC and Steven Kovacs** (Treasury Solicitor) for the respondents.

Lord Slynn said that it was agreed that if the two terms of 19 months and four years were to be treated as a single term, then the appellant's early release date was 19 April 1997. If, on the other hand, the two groups of sentences were to be treated separately, then his calculated release date from the 19-month sentence was 19 May 1994, and that from the four-year sentence was 13 January 1997.

It had been submitted for the appellant that section 51(2) of the 1991 Act as a matter of ordinary language could only be taken as referring to sen-

tences passed on the same occasion, and that the interpretation contended for by the respondents was contrary to principle in that it resulted in a sentence once passed being increased as a result of the prisoner's status being changed on a subsequent sentence.

That argument could not be accepted. In the first place, the language of section 51(2) was clear – terms of imprisonment whether consecutive or concurrent were to be treated as one term for the purposes of Part II of the Act. It was neither necessary nor permissible to read in the words "but only if the sentences are imposed by the same court on the same occasion".

Moreover, the result of a prisoner being converted from a short-term prisoner to a long-term prisoner did not retrospectively increase "the sentence".

What it did was to postpone the period of early release.

It was obviously desirable that a prisoner should be told the potential length of his imprisonment, but there was no difficulty in a judge telling him on sentence that if before the first sentence was completed, he received a further sentence which brought the total sentence for both offences to four years or more, he would have to serve two-thirds of the total sentence.

It would be a matter for the judge in each case to decide whether the sentence which he otherwise considered appropriate for the second offence should be reduced to allow for the fact that the prisoner would spend extra time in prison in respect of the first offence, because the penalty on the second offence had converted him into a long-term prisoner.

Kate O'Hanlon, Barrister

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Weddings, Funerals, etc.) should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1, Cannon Row, London SE1 1NF. (For details of charges and conditions, see the back of the Gazette.)

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, which is the highest of the Royal Order of Merit, was conferred on the Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, on 10 April 1998. The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, is accompanied by the Duchess of Gloucester, Princess of Wales, on a tour of the United Kingdom. The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, is accompanied by the Duchess of Gloucester, Princess of Wales, on a tour of the United Kingdom. The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, is accompanied by the Duchess of Gloucester, Princess of Wales, on a tour of the United Kingdom.

Birthdays Mrs Shirley Temple Black, former actress and US ambassador, 70; The Most Rev Michael Bower, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Southwark, 69; Mr Bill Cotton, chairman, Noel Coward Theatre, 70; Mr Antony Craxton, television producer, 80; Mr J.P. Doolan, writer, 72; Mr Barry Douglas, concert pianist, 38; Sir Diamond, director, 54; Air Marshal Sir Timothy Gordon, Director, Royal Institute of International Affairs, 54; The Hon Victoria Glendinning, writer, 61; Mr William Hagerty, former Editor, The People, 59; Sir Arnold Hall, former chairman, Hawker Siddeley Group, 82; Sir Russell Hillhouse, Permanent Under-Secretary, Scottish Office, 60; Mr Kevin Jarvis, cricketer, 45; Mr James Kirkup, writer and playwright, 75; Dr Richard Laws, former Master, St Edmund's College, Cambridge, 72; Mr Tony Miles, chess player, 43; Mr Ronald Neame, film producer and director, 87; Mr Mike Smith, disc jockey, 43; Professor George Steiner, writer and former Professor of Comparative Literature, Oxford University, 69; Sir Herbert Tejely, secretary, 90; Miss Tessa Wyatt, actress, 50; Sir Eric Yarrow, former chairman, Clydesdale Bank, 78; Mr Peter Young, High Commissioner to the Bahamas, 59.

Anniversaries Births: William Shakespeare, playwright and poet, 1564; Joseph Mallord William Turner, painter, 1775; Vladimir Vladimirovich Nabokov, writer and lepidopterist, 1899. Deaths: William Shakespeare, playwright and poet, 1616; Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, writer, 1616; William Wordsworth, poet, 1850; Rupert Clavner Brooks, poet, 1915; Larry "Buster" Crabbe (Clarence Linden Crabbe), swimmer and actor, 1983; Otto Preminger, film director, 1986. On this day: plans for a Channel Tunnel were turned down by Queen Victoria and Emperor Napoleon III of France, 1867; the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre was opened at Stratford-on-Avon, 1932. Today is St George's Day and the Feast Day of St Adalbert (Voitech) of Prague, Saints Felix, Fortunatus and Achilleus. St Gerard of Toul and St Ilar.

Lectures National Gallery: Marion Carlisle, "Roads and Ways (iv): An Autumn Landscape with a View of Her Stoen", 1pm. Victoria and Albert Museums: Catherine Wilson, "The Raphael Cartoons", 2.30pm. Tate Gallery: Celina Fox, "Turner's London", 6.30pm.

Dinners Mary Rose Trust: The Prince of Wales, President, Mary Rose Trust, attended a dinner held yesterday evening on board HMS Victory, Portsmouth. Second Sea Lord Sir John Brigstocke, Second Sea Lord and Commander-in-Chief Naval Home Command, and Lady Brigstocke were the hosts.

THE INDEPENDENT

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But they should have told us

BEFORE LABOUR ministers get carried away with the philosophical possibilities of the "Third Way" they might like to get back to some of the basics on which they were elected – openness above all. Whatever its destructive potential in other contexts might be, the five kilograms of highly radioactive nuclear materials that will shortly arrive at Dounreay by US military aircraft from Georgia are more than sufficient to blow a hole in the Government's credibility. Ministers have implied that the transfer and the secrecy surrounding it were both in some way inevitable. That is not quite right. Let us make some basic points.

First, no reasonable person could have any quarrel with the removal of deadly waste from countries like Georgia. It is a good thing that it is leaving that troubled part of the world. Would that less nuclear material were being produced by the dangerous and fragmented leftovers of the Soviet Union's nuclear energy programme. We cannot forget the experience and the lessons from the Chernobyl explosion, the site of which, as this newspaper recently revealed, is increasingly unsafe. The dangers from the installations in the old Eastern bloc are quite as terrifying in their potency as any other environmental or economic threat. Above all we should always have an open mind, an open door and an open wallet when it comes to dealing with this problem. So the Government is right to move the waste.

Second, so long as Dounreay really is a safe holding destination, we do not begrudge this small amount of material arriving in Scotland. The British, the Americans and the French and others should all take more nuclear waste. Of course we should not have to bear all of the burden and there are important questions here that can only be answered by a comprehensive agreement on how the nuclear powers allocate responsibilities and share costs. The fact that American protesters have effectively shifted the problem to us will not be lost on politicians or pressure groups. Third, this material should go to Dounreay only for storage. The permission to re-process the radioactive waste is up to the regulatory authorities. Thus far, we have some anxieties but no disagreement in principle with the Government.

But Parliament should have been told. The Prime Minister says that a statement couldn't be made before but that it would have been made on the day the stuff arrived. Really? Of course, details which would really compromise national security shouldn't be bandied around. But the threat here was less terrorism than a Greenpeace protest dominating BBC television headlines. And that isn't nearly reason enough to hide an important and controversial act of public policy. The only reason the government came to the House of Commons to give a statement is because the local MP, Robert MacLennan, made them do so. The only reason he, his constituents, and the rest of us know anything at all about this affair is because the information became public knowledge via the *New York Post* (not a high circulation figure in the far north of Scotland). There is a simple and overriding obligation on the Government to tell people what is going on. We had thought better of the Government.

The argument deployed by ministers that the material would eventually go towards manufacturing isotopes to be used in the treatment of cancer is somewhat disingenuous. There are stockpiles of uranium from which these could be made already in existence. It was not essential to have this small additional quantity – which was the implication. So what was Tony Blair's motive? Not to treat cancer. He was helping dismantle a dangerous stockpile and doing Bill Clinton a favour at the same time. We don't have a big problem with that. There is nothing reprehensible about helping a friend. Given the efforts that Bill Clinton has put into the Good Friday agreement maybe this very small favour is well worth the while.

But hushing this up was foolish and depressing. It generates suspicion. It makes people think, as Jeremy Paxman put it, "Why is this bastard lying to me?" It raises anxieties in the public mind about what is really going on, which we hoped this still-new government would have calmed. There is a very simple and basic principle here – we have a right to know about the importation of deadly materials into this country. We have a right to debate these things, before it is too late. That right is far more valuable than political philosophy.

Stirrings of conscience

NOT FOR the first time, Clare Short has decided to stir things up a bit. This time, though, it's only tea. Yesterday the International Development Secretary helped relaunch the Co-Op's 99 brand of tea as an ethical product. Forget caffeine-free, pyramid teabags and Earl Grey, meet clear-conscience tea. Well, there's still nothing better to help place an innovation like this in perspective than a nice cup of tea; so why don't you put the kettle on while we give this one the taste test.

First, consumer politics is to be welcomed and is anyway irresistible. Information, on labels as well as in official documents, is power, and we want more, so we can make fuller choices. Second, let the Government lead: we're not suggesting that Ms Short takes a trolley round Whitehall. We do, however, expect to see ethical tea served in all ministries, mayoral parlours, and, yes, at Labour's Millbank Towers HQ (where they have to pay for their own refreshments nowadays). Tony Benn, who takes his tea by the pint, should be pressed into early adoption of the new brew. Third, though, as ethical consumers, we expect good quality too. Coffee drinkers of a leftist disposition may recall the introduction of various types of weapons-grade Nicaraguan solidarity coffee a few years back. This stuff may have done wonders for the Sandinistas but wasn't nearly so liberating for the drinker. We suspect that times have changed in the conscience business. Nowadays consumers won't put up with what is unpalatable in any sense of the word, so ethical tea will have to pass the taste test. So long as it does, we'll be buyers – sitting back, sipping and enjoying the cup that cheers the conscience too.



MILES KINGSTON

TODAY is National Book Day, which means that everyone is being encouraged to dash out and buy a new book. Well, that is certainly better than staying in and writing a new book, as there are far too many of them around already, but I want to draw attention to a section of the book trade that will get no attention at all today, and that is the second-hand book business.

I believe many people are deterred from going into second-hand bookshops not only because they don't realise what bargains they can find but because they are not sure how to behave once inside. So my mission for National Book Day is to tell you what to do once you are inside a second-hand bookshop. This, then, is the Second-Hand Bookshop Code of Practice for Customers. 1. Enter the shop without saying anything or even looking at the owner. If you do look at the owner, he will not be offering eye contact. He will be reading a book catalogue,

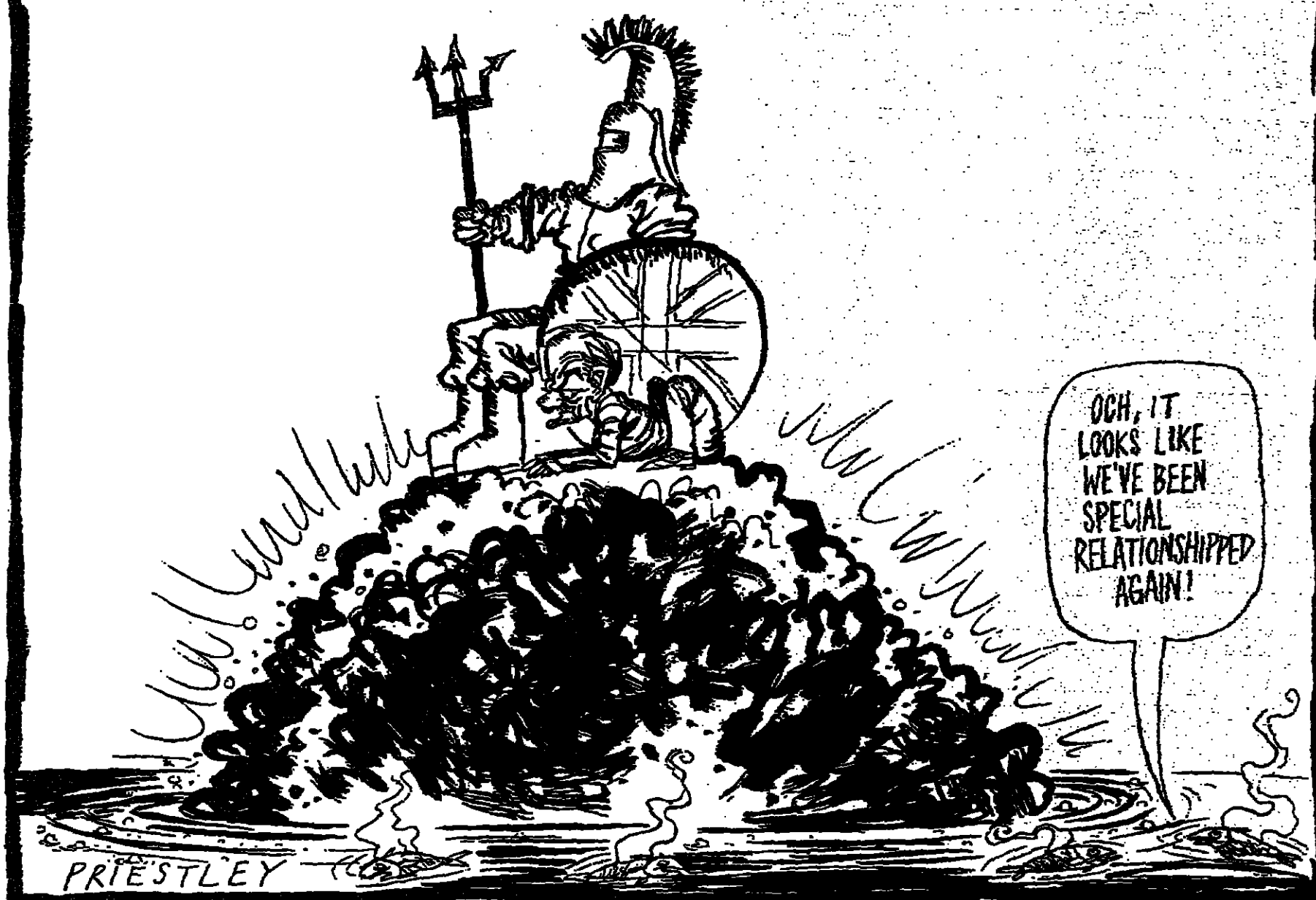
a letter, or a broadsheet newspaper. If he has none of these to hand he may even be reading a book, though with no apparent sign of enjoyment. Anything you offer in the way of a greeting will be unheeded. It is his way of testing you as a potential customer. 2. After ten minutes' unassisted browsing, the owner will admit to himself that you have potential as a customer, and greet you with a curt "Good morning" or "Han-a-no". This last is an approximation of a sound which will act as a greeting in any language – after all, for all the bookseller knows, you may be French or German or even American, and not speak any English at all. 3. You should make no reply. 4. Instead, carry on reading the book you have picked up, as if fascinated. This will convince him that you are indeed a serious customer. 5. When he has abandoned all hope of an answer and gone back to reading his letter/catalogue/paper, suddenly say whatever

he said back to him, then pick up another book to cut off the conversation right there. 6. After half an hour or so, the bookseller's nerve will crack and he will say something else. Nothing about the weather or politics, but one of the three following remarks or questions:— a) "Did you know there are some more rooms upstairs?" b) "Did you know there are some more rooms downstairs?" c) "Were you looking for something in particular?" 7. The correct answer to (a) and (b) is to say, "Oh, thanks", and stay exactly where you are. 8. The correct answer to (c) rather depends on your own taste in reading, but the important thing is not to ask for anything he might have. To say "biography" or "travel" is to give up the game immediately. He is bound to have lashings of both, and you will not be able to leave without feeling you

should buy something. Ask for an author or a subject you have already looked for and found no sign of. My favourite responses are "Well, H L Mencken, actually," and "Do you have a humour section?" They very rarely have either. 9. The bookseller, not having any H L Mencken or humour, not even perhaps being quite sure who H L Mencken was, will try to approximate it to something he DOES have. So he will now say something like: "Mencken was American, wasn't he? We've got a good American section. Travel mostly," or "We don't have a humour section as such, but there are some nice cartoon collections on the art shelves, and I believe there are some quite good editions of Jerome K Jerome in the fiction." 10. He is trying to tease more information out of you, hoping you will admit whether you are into written or pictorial humour, or how far you have a taste for Americans.

11. So the correct response is a non-committal "Hmmm". 12. At this point the bookseller will despair of getting anywhere with you, and fall silent. This is the point at which I drift upstairs and, when I am sure I am not being observed, get out of my coat pocket the six or so second-hand books I have brought with me and put them on the shelves. 13. This is because my wife has been pointing out for some time that we have far too many books at home. I cannot bring myself to throw a book away. There are many books which not even Oxfam or a school jumble sale will take. The only course of action is to secrete them on to the shelves of a second-hand bookshop, by the above method. 14. I do not, of course, buy anything. 15. Can you imagine what the wife would say if I came back with more books? Hope this is of some help. Have a nice National Book Day!

FOOL, BRITANNIA



Sanctions on Iraq

DEREK FATCHETT'S letter justifying sanctions against Iraq (22 April) was revealing. On the day when the Foreign Office published its human rights report as part of its "ethical" foreign policy, it is worth noting the curious logic of the Minister of State's ethical beliefs.

According to him the mere act of blaming somebody else for conditions which arise in part from his own actions leaves him with clean hands. This is the argument that the US and UK governments have been using for years – blame Saddam and it becomes ethical to maintain the genocidal sanctions regime on the Iraqi people.

Whatever one does leaves one with a moral responsibility for the consequences. It was entirely predictable that Saddam would rather see his people starve than comply with what he considers a US dictate. He has been torturing and murdering his people for twenty years. The UK government, as one of the principal supporters of sanctions, does hold some responsibility for the 1 million or more deaths in Iraq.

Mr Fatchett also neglects to mention that the UN sanctions committee has blocked Iraqi attempts to import numerous items since 1991. This does not mean that every member of the committee opposed particular export applications, rather that either the US and the UK chose to oppose these applications. The "Red List" of proscribed articles includes: light bulbs, socks, wristwatches, ovens, needles, nails and refrigerators. Other items vetoed have included baby food, rice, blankets, pencils, soap, sanitary towels, water purification chemicals, medical journals and medical swabs. The mind boggles at how the Foreign Office might define these items as contributing to Iraq's weapons programmes. The obvious answer is that the US and the UK are waging an economic war on Iraq which goes far beyond the requirements of cease-fire resolution 687.

SIMON FAULKNER
Committee Against Repression and for Democratic Rights in Iraq
Manchester

Low pay for dons

THE PLAINTIVE plea by Mr Burgess, the past president of the Association of University Teachers, will of course fall on deaf ears, like all such other pleas over the last decade or so (letter, 21 April). How many more years will it take for him and his colleagues to realise that government funding is synonymous with underfunding? If there were any extra funds they would go to the genuinely needy.

Undoubtedly, university teachers are poorly paid and that will be increasingly reflected in the quality of people entering the profession. The only hope is new money and that new money must come from the main beneficiaries, the students. Mr Burgess talks of price sensitivity. There are no prices in higher education. All is Mickey Mouse money and there can be no progress until the true cost of higher education, including that of greatly enhanced salaries for university teachers, is known and charged. It is for government then to decide how far it is prepared to underfund the student body. In those circumstances, the votes of a million students will count rather more than those of a handful of disaffected academics. It is time for the AUT to wake up to *realpolitik*.

Professor Sir GRAHAM HILLS
Inverness

Safeguard the Downs

YOUR COVERAGE highlights the Countryside Commission officials' bizarre view that the South Downs only need the minimal protection of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (report, 20 April). Unlike almost all other councils in the area, Brighton and Hove council went to a great deal of trouble and expense to consult with its residents on the future of the South

LETTERS

Post letters to Letters to the Editor and include a daytime telephone number
Fax 0171 293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

Downs. The outcome was to

emphatically support National Park status, which would bring enhanced protection and better funding. Incredibly, the commission officials have decided not to give any extra weight to submissions from councils that consulted with their residents.

There are two last opportunities to overturn the officials' views. On Thursday the commissioners of the Countryside Commission will make their decision – we challenge them to listen to public opinion rather than that of their officials. If they do not they will surely bring further into question the relevance of this unelected quango. Finally, Michael Meacher, the Minister for the Environment, could make the very bold move of ignoring their advice and granting National Park status for the benefit of visitors and local residents alike.

DESTURNER MP
(Brighton Kemptown, Lab)
DAVID LEPPER MP
(Brighton Pavilion, Lab)
House of Commons

Studying human remains

THE Natural History Museum has within its collections items from human remains, the majority of which are ancient archaeological material from the UK. We also have a smaller amount of material from the rest of the world ("Museum urged to reveal grisly secrets", 17 April).

Our holding of material from Australia and Tasmania consists of 161 items, which includes skulls, partial or complete skeletons and fragmentary pieces. None of these specimens is stored in spirit ("pickled"). The Museum has documentation on all of these, but because they were donated by individuals and other institutions this information is not always as full as is desirable under modern museum standards. The Museum has done, and is doing, all in its power to enhance the relevant

information on these specimens.

Museum staff handle the collections with special care and sensitivity and access to the museum's human origin collections is always granted to bona fide scientists carrying out research on human variation and origins.

The World Archaeological Congress requested access to our records of Aboriginal remains in 1991-2, and we co-operated in checking details concerning our collections within the palaeontology department. On 8 April we received a request from the World Archaeological Congress for information to be provided by 27 April, which we will supply.

Any formal governmental requests for the return of these collections are considered individually. However, the Museum is governed by the British Museum Act, under which statute it is required to retain and conserve its collections.

Dr NEIL CHALMERS
Director
The Natural History Museum,
London SW7

Sign for the deaf

JEFF McWHINNEY, Chief Executive of the British Deaf Association, makes valid points about the potential disruption resulting from any attempt at registration as a trademark of the "handshape" symbol for a telephone (letter, 6 April).

We fully recognise its importance as a recognised symbol for the deaf. Although we have been using the symbol for years in our advertising, let me assure him that BT has no plans to constrain the use of this common gesture. On the contrary, we welcome its unrestricted use, as I am sure everyone else does. RUPERT GAVIN
Managing Director, Consumer Division
British Telecom
London EC1

Man-made floods

THE CATASTROPHIC floods should come as no surprise. We've drained the farming countryside to death, and sealed the surface of every town and city. Now we are threatening to make things even worse, with much more impervious development on "brownfield" sites in cities. In addition, there is a five-year programme currently under way with £850m for increasing the size of stormwater sewers. This is likely to make the flooding much worse in rivers just downstream.

Our trees and woodlands play a vital role in holding back rainwater on their leaves, but they are falling fast, as cable TV trenches chop through the roots, and chemical pollution speeds their decline.

We need to promote a policy of porous cities: to use the projected building of 4.4 million new homes as a means of reducing, rather than aggravating, the problem of stormwater flooding. Urban forestry, soak-aways and porous paving could do much to make our towns and cities more sustainable. CHRIS BAINES
Wolverhampton

Gays and the church

THE Rev Neil Dawson's claim (letter, 20 April) that biblical condemnation of homosexuality is not "clear-cut" is a confusing one: I fail to see what could be more clear-cut than, for example, "Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman: that is detestable" (Leviticus 18:22). CRAIG ANDERSON
Edinburgh

EDWARD CONDRY is wrong to suggest that George Michael would have been arrested had he been straight (letter, 20 April). Police officers hang around gay meeting-places waiting to arrest gay men who engage in sexual behaviour in public. Rarely is any complainant produced as a witness, other than the police officers involved. When did you last hear of police staking out lovers' lanes, waiting for the heterosexual fun to begin? STEPHEN BAKER
London E15

The silences that speak volumes – how to survive in a second-hand bookshop

19/COMMENT

Robin Cook reveals a sad lack of passion for the Third Way



ANNE
McELVOY

ON LABOUR'S NEW
PHILOSOPHER

CATCHING sight of the cowering nymphs in James Barry's imposing Georgian masterpiece, *The Progress of Human Culture and Knowledge*, at the Royal Society of Arts, the Foreign Secretary looked rather bemused. Timetabling difficulties caused by his *deuxièmes notes* accounted for the stimulating location. This discommodation alone could not however explain why Robin Cook appeared to have undergone a political character transplant and become Tony Blair.

His speech yesterday on New Labour's Third Way was full of Blairite dualisms – responsibilities came with their rights in tow, globalisation would make nations "interdependent and independent" simultaneously. There was an ungraspable smoothness about this performance quite unsuited to Robin Cook, a rough-edged politician who usually manages to annoy someone in the course of a major pronouncement.

But this was no mistake by New Labour's central casting. Mr Cook was given this anniversary platform as a mark of both Mr Blair's regard and a slight nervousness about his colleague. He very much wants to keep him where he is now – having acquired that rare thing for a post-war Labour government, a Foreign Secretary who does not divide the party as David Owen, Tony Croland, George Brown, Ernest Bevin and even (as a cypher of Harold Wilson over Vietnam) Michael Stewart did in their various ways.

The Third Way – now official Blairite terminology – is hallmarked by its claims to equidistance between two previously existing models, both of which the Government is keen to be seen to reject. It is, said Mr Cook, "a political project as distinct from the individualist politics of neo-liberalism as it is distinct from the corporate ethos of old-fashioned social democracy". Later, he helpfully identified the first category as the governing principle of the Thatcher years.

But it is not true that New Labour is as far removed from the first category as from the second. A passing Martin would recognise that the Government's actions, rather than its calibrated words, show it to be far closer to civic conservatism than to social democracy. The Third Way is a rhetorical device to avoid owning up to this.

Labour's centre of gravity has shifted. Otherwise, Mr Cook would have been delivering his speech at the Scottish TUC conference, where they have a rather different idea of the Third Way from that of the Social Market Foundation, the bracingly pro-market think-tank which hosted Mr Cook's lecture.

The sleight of hand is not new – the Tories also performed it by boasting of being neo-

liberal free market, individualistic hard lads. In fact, the Tory government, under both Thatcher and Major's leadership, was mildly authoritarian and – for all its declared hostility to the state – used its machinery relentlessly to achieve social change. The National Curriculum was a collectivist straight-jacket. The Child Support Agency provided the biggest single interventionist act by government since National Insurance. A good thing too – but it is rich to hear the people who introduced it priding themselves on having pursued the retreat of the state.

Test Mr Cook's propositions about the equidistance on the policies of Labour's first year and the veil is torn apart. David Blunkett's insistence that parents take more responsibility for their children's education is an individualistic instinct.

Jack Straw is as tough on crime as Michael Howard – he just has a better manner. The emphasis on individual responsibility inherent in Welfare to Work similarly chimes with Tory instincts. The main point of disagreement now is about the potential distortion of the labour market as a result of the New Deal, not about the intention.

Mr Cook's Third Way, constructed as it was on these false antitheses, was forced to dress up every minor achievement as a great leap forward. His foreign policy was redressing our "international isolation". Were the Single European Act, the Maastricht Treaty and the dispatch of troops to Bosnia agreed by a government modelling itself on Erzer Hoxha's Albania?

In his heart, and more importantly in his formidable brain, Mr Cook surely knows that the Third Way should mean more than this. He is a true constitutional radical but I was struck by the deadness of his language when he spoke of constitutional reform. Yet it is this, rather than any First, Second or even Third Way that will really define the success of this government. Mr Cook lacked the gut conviction of the man who fought so long and hard for a Scottish parliament and to make Westminster more accountable to the regions.

His attacks on hereditary peerage in opposition were those of a true, street-fighting democrat determined to destroy the vestige of aristocratic rule. Now, he promises that the Government would "deliver on this reform", as if it were just another item on the pledge list. Does he feel no urgency, no passion about this at all?

After the lecture, he fielded awkward questions, joking, "these sessions are circuit training for politicians". But the thing about circuits is that they go round and round. I can't believe that Mr Cook is content to do that for the rest of his career.

He can do the job of Foreign Secretary – the weaselly part of it comes more easily to him than one would have thought. But in the end, Mr Cook belongs somewhere else – at the heart of the constitutional realignment of the United Kingdom. His own Third Way should be the extension of Scottish devolution as successor to Donald Dewar. He would be a formidable advocate of Scotland's interests against Westminster – including the need for tax-raising powers.

Mr Cook's occasional ability to find trouble on the West Bank is as nothing compared to the trouble he might cause Number Ten from Edinburgh. Less biddable than Mr Dewar and far more ambitious for the Scottish parliament – it is no wonder Mr Blair intends to keep him on a treadmill elsewhere.

How the Home Secretary could cut burglary at a stroke: legalise drugs



DAVID
AARONOVITCH
THE HIDDEN COSTS
OF PROHIBITION

THE Very Senior Policeman was in love with Jack Straw. We lent across the High Table at X College, our faces close together, and he told me how the Blackburn MP was set to become the greatest Home Secretary of the century. "He does the right things, you see?" said the ruddy-faced Chief Constable. "He's not an ideologue. If it works, he's interested in it." So we toasted Jack in red wine and port. Who needs Lodge Night and funny handshakes when you've got Oxbridge colleges?

But what about the legalisation of drugs? I asked. Not just cannabis (I do not think that I know a single person who has not smoked dope) but the nasty, hard stuff? "Oh, I give it five years," he replied breezily, and with complete confidence. "There is no future in prohibition. All my colleagues seem to be persuaded of the need to change. It's got to come."

The contradiction here is not difficult to spot. There is no sign whatsoever that Jack Straw is prepared to back down from the eternal, unsuccessful war against drugs. His equation seems very simple: drugs harm those who take them, and those who have to live with the users. Giving up on the battle would be to invite the next generation to regard heroin and cocaine as being the millennial versions of alcohol and tobacco. But here was a progressive top cop who was arguing that just such a move was inevitable.

Well, yesterday there was a long feature in the *London Evening Standard* about yet another drug bust team. "Last year," it said, "the inspectors recorded 134 hits, finding a total of 1,747 kilos of heroin... 135 more kilos than last year." I think this was supposed to be good news, but was it? Did these seizures entail fewer addicts on our streets, or were they themselves the proximate cause of many of our houses being burgled?

The same ambiguity hung over Tuesday's Home Office survey on the link between drug-taking and criminality. This study – of arrestees who agreed to be tested – showed that two-thirds had taken illegal drugs (and a quarter had drunk alcohol) in the period leading up to their detention. The results varied from place to place, but nevertheless indicated a much more direct and constant



'Legal heroin would be cheaper and safer'

MSI

link than had been expected. But what was the study really telling us? It could have been saying that just taking drugs makes you commit crime (you know, crazed crack addict runs amok, that kind of thing). Or it might have been trying to shout out a more difficult message, namely that it is the prohibition of drugs which itself creates all these burglaries, muggings and assaults.

The Home Office estimates that, at the moment, 130,000 users need around £1.3bn every year to fund their habits (that's £10,000 per annum per user). Roughly £850m of this must be raised

sesame snack things that are made in Poland. So every time some heroic customs employee digs another dodgy package out of the wheel arch of a Mondeo, it probably means several more house-breakings.

All this failure comes despite an immensely costly police campaign, a soaring prison population and (in America at least) the virtual criminalisation of an entire generation of black youth. And I haven't even mentioned the filip that keeping drugs illegal – because of the immense profits available – gives to organised crime and violent gangsterism.

Do drug seizures entail fewer addicts on our streets, or are they themselves the cause of our houses being burgled

from criminal activity to keep the users going. And – also according to the Home Office – these users would need to nick £2.5bn worth of yours and my worldly goods in order to get that £850m.

Part of the problem is that they have to raise so much: £850m is the famous "street" price. It is the price that is paid once the drug barons and middlemen have taken their vast cut, and paid off their enforcers, couriers and bent officials. The drugs themselves are worth the tiniest fraction of that amount. Mostly grown in the Third World, their cost to the consumer – were they completely legal – would (allowing for tax) almost certainly be on a par with those

Personally I am not too interested in the libertarian argument for legalisation. save to admit that there is something in the argument that interfering too much in what people choose to do to themselves will often lead to bad law. My own take on this is strictly utilitarian. Might we be able significantly to reduce crime and also to reduce the damage to people caused by drug-taking, if we abandoned the prohibitive strategy?

Such evidence as we have is hotly contested, and largely consists of the famous Amsterdam experiment, in which a number of coffee-houses have been licensed to sell smallish amounts of hash to customers. Some claim that the in-

cidence of drug taking has risen with decriminalisation, and others that it has actually reduced. The latest report, by the Dutch Centre for Drug Research and released this week, supports the latter contention. It suggests that the use of marijuana may actually have declined by nearly half, and is far lower than in the US, where the drug is prohibited.

Why might such a reduction happen? It seems only logical that if drugs were cheaper and could be used openly, more kids would take them. This unimpeachable logic has always been the greatest argument against any kind of let up in the drugs war. But it is possible that the coffee-shops, limited in number though they are, have effectively replaced street and school sales, and with them the myriad tiny contacts between the young customer and the local supplier. Thus the pressure and occasion to take drugs may have been reduced.

In the long term, then, the question may not be whether to legalise, but rather exactly what form it should take. One possibility – a sci-fi scenario – would be to place drugs on an equal footing with other commercial products. We could nip along to the Megastore and buy the latest Rolf Harris CD and a packet of own-label smoke ("He's the man who brought you low-cost pensions. And now Richard Branson brings you Weirly Beards, the ultimate in relaxing weed").

This is not an attractive proposition when applied to cocaine or heroin, although it might well work for ecstasy and cannabis. But if hard drugs were purchasable over the counter at pharmacies, and the prices were a reasonable reflection of the costs to the companies to manufacture them and maintain strict quality, there would be no pushers, and no criminal multiplier effect. Indeed, a successful and sustained public information campaign, as there has been over cigarettes or drink-driving, might well reduce use substantially.

Now, the greatest Home Secretary of the century seems unwilling to think in this way yet; the political and international obstacles are immense. But we are in 1998, and if he would like to be the greatest Home Secretary of the next century, then he might just like to listen to what his (adoring) Chief Constables are already telling him: legalise.

View from Here, Education+

The oh-so-cool squirrels of Dulwich Park ...

JOHN
WALSH



YOU might have seen a number of dissembling references to the Spencer family in the papers recently, suggesting that they're a pack of grasping and mercenary opportunists who think nothing of converting their royal connections into hard cash. Not a bit of it, according to Amanda Foreman, the young Oxford historian who has written a life of Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire. Ms Foreman who, as well as being the finest royal historian since JH Plumb and the daughter of Carl Foreman (who wrote the screenplays to *The Bridge on the River Kwai*, *High Noon* and *Born Free*), and being cruelly beautiful (I once watched her in a south London pub fending off two importunate young smoothies by telling them she was a tabloid journalist) is a woman of some resourcefulness. On starting her researches into the life of the Duchess – who was the Princess Diana of her day with her eating disorders, and her "people's duchess" reputation – Ms Foreman discovered that her subject's letters were scattered all over the kingdom. She would have to embark on a kind of royal progress to investigate them all. She had never learned to drive, in fact she'd failed her test six times, but took it once more and passed, and set off on an 18-month circuit of England, looking the archives of stately homes for letters, documents and paintings. In doing so, she discovered that the various archives operate a tariff system. "All scholars get charged for access to the family papers," she

told me, "which is only fair since the home owners have to employ an archivist. But they vary a great deal. Looking at the papers of the Marquis of Lansdowne at Bowood House costs you £100 a day. At Castle Howard, it's £30 a week. At Chatsworth they charge £50 a week plus VAT, but they gave me a special flat rate". Top of the range, however, was the Spencer family. "They couldn't have been nicer. Not only did they not charge a cent for looking at the stuff, they brought me tea on a silver tray."

I can understand the concern voiced by animal welfare workers at the Moors Valley Country Park in Dorset. They've discovered that the park's squirrels have acquired some shocking habits. They now routinely pick up discarded fag-ends, tear the paper off and eat the tobacco. Even worse, some of the little blighters have started attacking picnickers who fail to offer them crumbs and scraps.

Nasty – but this is only the nursery slopes of Squirrel Delinquency. Down in south London, we're inured to far worse behaviour by arboreal rodents. I first saw a couple of them doing the cigarette-butt thing in my garden months ago; instead of eating the tobacco, they were rolling it up in a blue Rizla paper. A week later, one of them appeared in the morning with terrible bags under his eyes and held a billiard cue at a weary angle. Soon, you could hardly walk through Dulwich Park without encountering half a dozen shift-

less members of the *sciurus* family hanging out by the railings on the corner of the pond, taking the piss out of the starlings. Most of them had become long-term and discerning smokers (Camel Straights rather than Marlboro Lights) and if you looked under the lime tree by the bandstand, you could find a cache of tiny Tennent's Extra cans, the ones with the pictures of bushy-tailed females in abbreviated underwear. The Dulwich Squirrel Chapter ("Nuts to the World") is their arrogant board" now hoard dubious-looking white rocks, and will approach your outstretched fingers only if you've made an appointment by mobile phone. They still scurry nervously across the path at the approach of humans, but now they crash into the rubbish bins (it's the Calvin Klein shades). And the Dorset picnickers should think themselves lucky they only get a nip on the ankle from habit-crazed squirrels. In SE21, they nick your car keys, scurry into your Mondeo and cruise up Herne



Hill looking for trouble. I blame the parents.

Having returned from holiday a while ago, I'm still puzzled by one thing. Sicilians are famously the worst drivers in the world – you cannot drive at 100kph down the superstradas of the south-east without encountering, every few miles, a mad local person reversing his Fiat Uno from a slip road into your path. But more interestingly, they're bewilderingly keen on overtaking. They overtake on blind corners, on the crest of enormous hills, on tiny narrow roads that wind round the vertiginous hills of Ragusa. When crawling in an impatient line behind a wheezing truck, they abandon all the accepted protocol of queuing to overtake – at any moment, one will break ranks and roar past 12 Alfas and Lamborghinis in order to pass the truck at the front. It's something to do with machismo, I believe...

Or is it? I have this theory about people who drive on the right in hot countries. Most of them, by the law of averages, will be right-handers. In their heads, the two sides of the brain will be operating by their usual cracked logic: the left will take care of the intellectual and linguistically expressive bits of life, while the right will be more concerned with three-dimensional, spatial ways of seeing the world. For a right-hander driving in a right-hand lane, his perceptions will be unusually spatial and non-verbal, ie he will be entirely at home on the right, just looking at the

scenery, but be entirely unable to explain why. Then what happens? He finds himself behind a slow-moving hired car (with me inside) stuck behind a juggernaut with Brussels licence plates. His spatial awareness – his view of the hills, his governing of perspective – is suddenly, enragingly, occluded by some foreign halfwit and a fat Belgian in a string vest. He cannot stay behind these people. The right side of his brain is working overtime, fighting for mastery. So, disdaining all rules, logic and oncoming traffic, he overtakes – and in crossing over to the left-hand side of the road, he discovers the little-used verbal faculty of the brain's left side. This is why he yells "la fan culo" at you, while thundering by. He doesn't hate you. He's following a basic impulse of the conscious mind. In Britain, meanwhile, because you drive on the left, the impulses of right-hand drivers will be mainly verbal. That's why you spend so much time chatting to yourself, and vocalising about the Wonderbra advertisements on Vauxhall Bridge, and shouting abuse at Mr Jack Cunningham on Radio Four. And why, when you steer into the right-hand lane to overtake someone, you're suddenly overwhelmed by a sense of boundless wide-open space, which sends you smartly back into the left-hand lane, telling yourself, Christ, that was a bit of a narrow squeak.

There now: the theory of European traffic, explained at last. I expect a call from the Department of Transport any day now.

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Brown urges pay restraint

By Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

GORDON BROWN last night issued a plea for pay restraint and a national effort to boost productivity in industry.

The Chancellor's call for pay moderation came as new figures yesterday failed to lift the threat of a further rise in interest rates. Private sector pay deals have edged higher, according to the latest official data, despite a slowdown in the pace at which unemployment is falling.

Mr Brown said, in a speech to the Confederation of British Industry: "It would be the worst of short-termism to pay ourselves more today at the cost of higher interest rates, fewer jobs and slower growth tomorrow."

While the public sector had understood the need for moderation, private sector employers had not, he added.

The Chancellor also stressed that he and Margaret Beckett, President of the Board of Trade, would be looking at the reasons for low UK productivity levels, which lag behind both the Continent and the US.

Average earnings growth in the private sector increased to 5.2 per cent in the three months to February, up from 4.7 per cent last summer, according to the Office for National Statistics (ONS). By contrast, public sector pay growth remained unchanged at 2.4 per cent, down from 3 per cent six months ago.

The Government's tough public sector pay policy has

kept average earnings growth across the economy as a whole more or less flat. It was unchanged at 4.5 per cent in the three months to February.

But pay increases in services, where the most severe skill shortages have been reported, climbed from 4.6 to 4.8 per cent.

Other figures showed that unemployment fell by 52,000 to a level of 1.8 million in the December to February quarter. Corresponding to 6.4 per cent of the work force, this was the lowest since the data started in spring 1984.

The pace of decline in joblessness has slowed, however. The picture from the survey-based measure, published on a rolling monthly basis for the first time this month, was confirmed by the more up-to-date claimant count.

The number of claimants fell by 6,400 to 1,375,700, or 4.9 per cent of the work force, in March. This drop showed a marked slowdown from the average of 9,100 in the latest three months and 17,300 in the latest six months.

The difference of nearly half a million between the two unemployment numbers is mainly accounted for by married women looking for work who are not entitled to claim benefit.

The new presentation of the figures also showed that the number of 18-24-year olds out of work for more than 12 months fell to 53,800 in the latest quarter, half the level of a year ago; but the number unemployed for six to 12 months

rose slightly to 64,700, and was down 27,800 on a year earlier.

The level of employment rose by 41,000, while employment in manufacturing also increased by 9,000 in the three months to February.

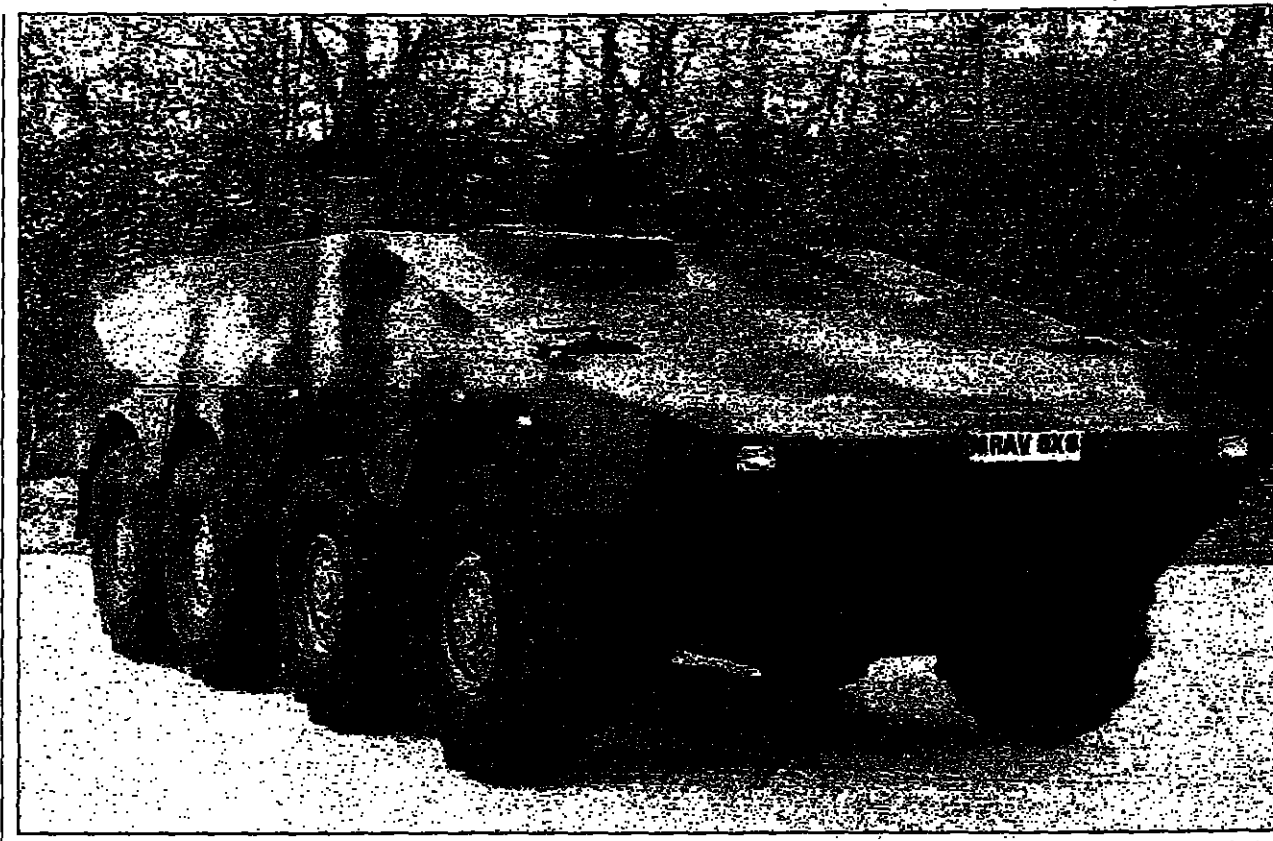
The verdict of City experts was that yesterday's evidence from the jobs market, which the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) agreed would be decisive, could be read either way. "It does not resolve the debate as far as the MPC is concerned," said Eric Fitchwick, an economist at Nikko Europe.

One problem as far as economists are concerned is the fact that the new presentation of the statistics, although far more reliable than the old, is less up-to-date.

The Bank of England separately reported a slowdown in the rate of broad money growth to 9.5 per cent. And the ONS said car production for export jumped in March to its highest level since August 1996. Total car production was flat during the month and has climbed 5.6 per cent during the latest six months.

Today and tomorrow bring more key figures, with retail sales last month and GDP growth in the first quarter of this year.

The continued uncertainty about the outlook for interest rates was reflected in the market reaction, where yesterday's statistics had very little impact on the pound. It hovered near DM3 all day, eventually ending at DM3.0013. The FTSE 100 index closed down 23.9 points at 5931.1.



The future way to battle: The MRAV-GTK-VBC1 8x8 variant, to be built by the winning consortium

GKN wins battle taxi deal

By Michael Harrison

A FURTHER bout of rationalisation among Europe's defence manufacturers was in prospect yesterday after a three-nation consortium including GKN was awarded a £2.4bn contract to develop a new generation of "battlefield taxis".

The order for up to 5,000 Multi-Role Armoured Vehicles (MRAV) for the British, German and French armies will be worth £800m to GKN Defence and will safeguard 450 jobs at its Telford factory in Shropshire when full production begins in 2004.

More significantly, it could provide the focal point for the consolidation of Europe's manufacturers of land fighting vehicles. GKN's other two partners in the Euroconsortium are Arge, a partnership between Krauss Maffei, MaK and Wegmann of Germany, and Giat of France, which entered the grouping at eleventh hour.

The MRAV contract is Europe's largest ever collaborative procurement programme for armoured vehicles. The production run could exceed 7,500 vehicles if other European governments join the programme.

Euroconsortium beat off a rival bid from the Team In-

ternational consortium, which includes Vickers and Alvis of the UK. There is now a prospect of Vickers and GKN re-opening negotiations about a merger of their respective land vehicle operations.

Vickers, which manufactures the Challenger tank at Leeds and Newcastle, decided last month not to pursue a deal with GKN. However, analysts believe it may be having second thoughts. A GKN spokeswoman said: "This deal obviously gives us the opportunity to be at the centre of any restructuring that might take place but we have no plans to talk to Vickers nor is there a for-sale sign over

our fighting vehicles business."

Meanwhile, the governments of Britain, France, Germany, Spain and Italy, welcomed progress made so far towards the restructuring of Europe's defence and aerospace industries.

A communiqué issued after a meeting of industry ministers from the five countries in London urged their respective industrial partners to complete the conversion of Airbus into a single corporate entity by 1 January next year and make the integration of their aerospace and defence interests "as rapid and as far-reaching as possible".

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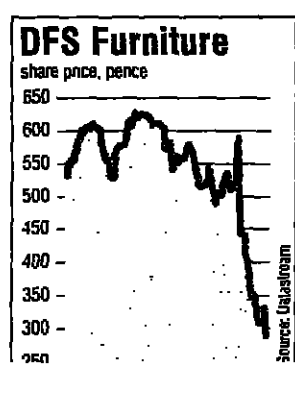
DFS issues second warning after rain stops 28-year run of growth

By Nigel Cope
City Correspondent

DFS Furniture issued its second profits warning in two months yesterday as the retailer ended 28 years of unbroken profits growth with a 2.7 per cent fall in first half profits. The sofa specialist blamed the latest setback on the torrential rain over the Easter weekend. The group said a third of its branches are in the Midlands, which was most affected by flooding.

Profits in DFS's second half will now be below the £18.2m recorded in the first half. Like-for-like sales fell by 4.9 per cent compared with the first half last year, though no figures were available for current trading.

DFS shares slid 32.5p to



286.5p on the news. The shares peaked at 651.5p in 1996.

"We have had a bad year but it is not a trend, it is a temporary aberration," the founder and chief executive Sir Graham Kirkham said. "We are as strong as we have ever been. This is just a blip."

Several retailers of higher ticket items have reported sales slowdowns recently. Last month, MFI and Carpetright, as well as DFS, said consumer spending had faltered.

Sir Graham said DFS stores had been affected by a series of one-off factors. He blamed poor weather last August; the death of Diana, Princess of Wales; Easter flooding and the deadline for self-assessment tax forms on 31 January. The company said shoppers may have had to pay out money for tax settlements that would otherwise have been used as disposable income.

The latest warning prompted analysts to downgrade forecasts from around £37m-39m to around £35m. Nick Bubb of SG Securities said: "You don't see

Courts, Uno and Harveys complaining about floods and tax bills. It looks like it might be something internal."

Some said DFS may be falling victim to its heavy promotion of interest-free credit. They said customers who did have the money to buy a new sofa or three-piece suit might be choosing to haggle for cash deals elsewhere.

Chief operating officer Jon Massey said DFS enjoyed several good months up to January but that higher interest rates had begun to bite afterwards.

"We saw reasonably buoyant trading as we went into our new year sale but that demand ebbed away and February saw that trend continuing. We put that down to the impact of all

those interest-rate increases during 1997 that clicked into people's mortgages at the start of January," he said.

He added: "If there is cost-cutting that can be done without damaging the concept we will look at it."

DFS profits in the first half fell 2.7 per cent to £18.2m on sales up from £126m to £130m. The company enjoyed rapid growth after coming to the stock market in 1994. Since then, Sir Graham Kirkham and his family have sold almost their entire holding and they now control just 8 per cent. Sir Graham sold 49 per cent of his shares at 261p and a further 20 per cent at 328p. In 1996, his two children sold another 20 per cent at 533p.

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£225,000 bonus for man behind coal mining crisis

By Michael Harrison

RICHARD BUDGE, who was heavily criticised by a committee of MPs last month for precipitating the crisis facing the coal industry, received a performance bonus of almost £225,000 last year in his job as chief executive of RJB Mining.

The latest report and accounts from Britain's biggest coal producer show that Mr Budge was awarded a bonus of £224,460 in 1997, taking his total remuneration including pension contributions to £610,000, even though profits fell by 9 per cent and RJB's share price has slumped by almost 75 per cent in the last year. In 1996 his total salary was £657,000.

In its report on the future of the coal industry last month, the Commons Trade and Industry Select Committee took RJB's management severely to task for its part in precipitating the coal crisis.

The committee said RJB had failed to reduce costs sufficiently to retain market share assuming that it would be rescued by a package of government assistance. "The commercial judgement and negotiating tactics of RJB Mining are both open to criticism," the MPs added.

RJB is now facing the



Richard Budge: Criticised

threat of heavy pit closures and up to 5,000 job losses following the expiry of guaranteed contracts with the electricity generators.

Coal sales to the generators fell from 33.4 million tonnes in 1996 to 26.8 million tonnes last year. But so far RJB has only contracted to supply the three big coal-fired generators with about half that amount of coal for the coming year.

Meanwhile, the United Kingdom Coal Producers yesterday criticised the electricity regulator Professor Stephen Littlechild for being "over-zealous" in promoting competition and advocating the building of more gas-fired stations. It claimed his "flawed mathematics" were costing consumers £240m a year.

Avis Europe test drives auto-hire system

By Andrew Yates

AVIS Europe yesterday unveiled plans to launch a do-it-yourself car hire service designed to cater for those weary business executives who are fed up with waiting in long queues to pick up a new vehicle.

Europe's largest car hire group is testing a new electronic system, supplied by GEC, which

could dispense with time-consuming administration. Customers will simply check in at specially adapted cash dispensers using a credit card or specifying a business account and then drive the vehicle away. The car will be tagged electronically.

When the vehicle is returned it will pass through transponders which will recognise which car it is, the mileage driven and the

amount of fuel left in the tank. The driver will then receive an automatic invoice on checking out through an electronic kiosk.

"We are trialling the system in the UK and Germany and our plans are very advanced," said Alun Cathcart, Avis Europe's chief executive. The test should be completed in the next 18 months and Avis plans to install the revolutionary new system at destinations including

airports throughout its network within the next few years.

However, holidaymakers will not benefit from the new scheme. Avis is only planning to allow regular business clients to take advantage of electronic car hire. The company claims that tourists prefer the human touch, quizzing staff about local attractions and facilities.

Avis recently won a contract to supply British Airways to pro-

vide its passengers with cars. As part of the new partnership, customers returning cars to Heathrow airport can now hand their keys back to Avis staff at its branch next to the car park and use BA's office next door to check in all their luggage.

Avis reported profits up 33 per cent to £75.6m in the year to February thanks to a buoyant car hire market in the UK. Investment column, page 22

STOCK MARKETS

Indices	Close	Change	Change (%)	52 wk high	52 wk low	Yield (%)
FTSE 100	5931.10	-23.90	-0.40	6150.90	4318.40	3.48
FTSE 250	5570.50	-27.10	-0.49	5562.80	4384.20	2.88
FTSE 350	2856.20	-6.70	-0.23	2938.70	2124.00	3.37
FTSE All Share	2785.36	-5.92	-0.21	2861.12	2104.68	3.34
FTSE SmallCap	2634.10	-3.70	-0.12	2641.40	2162.10	2.91
FTSE Rising100	1411.70	8.80	0.62	1415.30	1225.20	3.24
FTSE AIM	1079.50	8.90	0.82	1098.70	965.90	1.08
Dow Jones	9183.44	0.00	0.00	9193.05	8657.40	1.53
Nikkei	15761.54	-64.13	-0.41	20910.79	14489.31	0.98
Hang Seng	10971.47	9.21	0.08	18820.31	7909.13	3.66
Osaka	5290.65	-28.29	-0.53	5442.10	3208.84	1.51

INTEREST RATES

Short sterling			UK 10 year gilt			US long bond		
1 m	3 m	1 yr	1 yr	10 yr	10 yr	1 yr	10 yr	10 yr
5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50
5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50
5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50
5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50

CURRENCIES

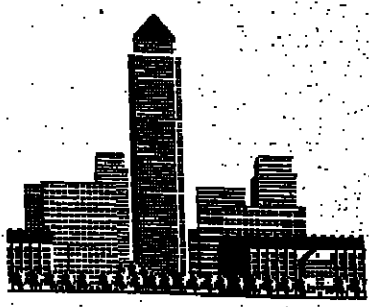
£/\$			DM/£			¥/£		
1 m	3 m	1 yr	1 m	3 m	1 yr	1 m	3 m	1 yr
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1.6741	1.6741	1.6741	1.6741	1.6741	1.6741	1.6741	1.6741	1.6741

TOURIST RATES

Country	Rate	Country	Rate
Australia (\$)	2.4847	Malta (lira)	0.6344
Austria (schilling)	20.45	Mexico (nuevo peso)	12.89
Belgium (franc)	66.14	Netherlands (guilder)	3.2776
Canada (\$)	2.3352	New Zealand (\$)	2.8892
Cyprus (pound)	0.9500	Norway (krone)	12.19
Denmark (krone)	11.18	Portugal (escudo)	204.68
Estonia (kroon)	6.9051	Saudi Arabia (rifle)	6.1043
France (franc)	9.7889	Singapore (\$)	2.5288
Germany (mark)	2.9368	South Africa (rand)	247.12
Greece (drachma)	507.33	South Africa (rand)	247.12
Hong Kong (\$)	12.59	Sweden (krone)	12.57
India (rupee)	1.5200	Switzerland (franc)	2.4245
Indonesia (rupiah)	61.14	Thailand (baht)	59.20
Israel (shekel)	5.7554	Turkey (lira)	388.38
Italy (lira)	2.0361	USA (\$)	1.6365
Japan (yen)	217.50		
Malaysia (ringgit)	5.9764		

Rates for information purposes only
Source: Thomas Cook

First steps to a pan-European defence group



OUTLOOK

ON THE BIG PRIZE IN AEROSPACE, THE PROPOSALS FOR CHANGE AT LIFFE, AND A RETAILER'S EXPLANATIONS FOR DISAPPOINTING TRADING

THE restructuring of Europe's defence and aerospace industries is at last beginning to take shape, albeit at the snail-like pace of a military marching band. The latest piece of the jigsaw fell into place yesterday as GKN teamed up with the French and Germans to build a new generation of "battlefield taxis".

Production of land fighting vehicles is a business where Europe has long suffered from chronic overcapacity with more than a dozen manufacturers chasing a shrinking procurement programme.

Of itself yesterday's deal will not automatically produce the much needed rationalisation. But so big is the contract - 7,500 vehicles worth £3.6bn - that it could easily suck the lifeblood from those left on the outside, obliging them to either join the party or self-destruct.

Meanwhile, in military helicopters, Michael Heseltine's dream looks like coming true 12 years after he stormed out of Cabinet with Westland and Agusta of Italy at last talking about a merger.

Even the biggest prize - the creation of a single pan-European aerospace and defence company encompassing British Aerospace, Daimler and Aerospaciale along with the Spanish, Italians and Swedes, no longer appears such a lost cause. The

French have yet to cross the Rubicon and accept that this behemoth will only see the light of day if they privatise their own industry first. Yet real progress has been made, not least the agreement by all parties that merging their assets into one fighting unit is the way forward.

Has Lord Simpson broken ranks by splashing out £300m on an US defence acquisition and making no secret that GEC has plenty of firepower left to take out an even bigger American target? Certainly, he has grown frustrated with the lack of progress in rationalising Europe's defence electronics industry. But GEC's transatlantic adventure could be just the kick in the pants its Continental counterparts need, reminding them that European consolidation is not the only game in town.

Liffe's messy compromise

AFTER two days of talking turkey, the board of Liffe has actually managed to agree something. This is no mean achievement, for the problem with the London International Financial Futures and Options Exchange is that it has traditionally

and necessarily been run on the basis of consensus; the result has been paralysis in decision making and an inability to change.

By Liffe's standards, the package of proposals announced yesterday are radical indeed; the question is whether they are radical enough, given the inroads the German screen-based trading systems run out of Frankfurt have been making into Liffe's core products and markets. To be fair, the board does seem to have gone some of the distance, but the key issue of separating ownership from membership is ducked. This is being left to "further analysis". The result is that the market will continue to be owned largely by members who trade on the floor of the exchange.

At the moment, the market is run rather in the nature of a club, which provides non-profit-making services to its members. So the first thing the board intends to do is introduce the profit motive. In future the market will be run on commercial lines. A £44m cut in expenditure and 130 redundancies have already been announced. Perhaps more important, the board says you won't have to be a member or own shares to use the planned electronic trading system. Access will be granted in return for subscriptions set at "competitive market rates".

However, in an inexplicable piece of fudge, the exchange adds this will need to be done through the intermediation of members. Progress has been made, but Liffe seems to have stopped short of going the whole hog. Another messy compromise, then. The Deutsche Terminborse must be loving it.

Poor excuses from DFS

THE RETAIL sector has treated the markets to some pretty rich excuses for its poor trading over the last six months, but Sir Graham Kirkham of DFS Furniture broke new ground yesterday with some absolute corkers. In addition to the usual suspects such as hot weather last August, the death of Princess Diana and the effect of higher interest rates, we now have self-assessment tax forms and the wrong kind of rain.

The tax forms made a difference, Sir Graham says, because the deadline for their return to the Inland Revenue was 31 January, just before the end of DFS's half year. The thinking here is that people who would otherwise have nipped out and bought a sofa had to earmark the

money to settle their tax bill instead.

As for the weather, Britain did not so much have the wrong kind of rain over Easter, simply too much of it. Sir Graham says that a third of DFS stores are in the Midlands, the area that was worst affected. Customers often drive for up to half an hour to reach their local DFS, the company claims. With the weather so grotty most decided not to chance it.

The odd thing here is that we have not heard similar excuses from the rest of the sector. Rivals such as Courts and Uno seem to be performing well regardless of the weather or tax bills.

What is clear is that after all its early successes, DFS has not managed its recent tendency to disappoint particularly well. Last October's trading update was hopelessly optimistic while the first profit warning in March came just weeks after an upbeat analyst's jaunt.

All this may not bother Sir Graham and his family much, of course, as they have reduced their stake in the business to just 8 per cent. The cleverest sellers were his two children. They got 533p for their shares 18 months ago, almost twice dad's average selling price. Still, filling in the tax forms can't have been so much fun.

£1m takeover sweetener pledged to Caradon chief

JURGEN HINZ, chief executive-elect of Caradon, the building products group, will receive a payoff of more than £1m if the company is taken over within the first year of his tenure. Caradon's annual report reveals that Mr Hinz's contract contains a clause entitling him to compensation for loss of office of 27 months' salary and benefits in the first year, falling to 18 months in the second year and 12 months in the third, a spokesman said yesterday. Mr Hinz, a US citizen who is seconded to the company from Caradon, Inc, has been offered a three-year contract which will give him an annual remuneration package of £450,000. Caradon denied suggestions that the contract was in breach of corporate governance rules on the length of directors' contracts.

Cadcentre shares slump

SHARES in Cadcentre, the plant design software company, lost a third of their value yesterday after the firm warned that its results for the year to 31 March would be below market expectations. The shares plunged 140p to 265p.

However, Cadcentre said the profits would be substantially higher than the £1.77m it reported last year. The company said a shortfall in sales in the Far East in the final quarter, which is traditionally its strongest trading period, had caused the results to fall below market forecasts. Trade in the Far East and Japan contributed nearly 13 per cent of revenues in 1997.

£25m for Game founder

Neil Taylor, one of the co-founders of Game, the entertainment software retailer which confirmed plans for a stockmarket listing yesterday, will realise around £25m from the float. Mr Taylor invested around £1m in the company when it started in 1990. He holds a 48.5 per cent stake in the group, which is expected to be valued at more than £100m, and will sell half his holding. Game is raising £10m from the float to fund new store openings. It currently has 70 outlets but has set a target of 120.

JJB keeps growing

JJB SPORTS, one of Britain's leading sports retailers, yesterday dismissed claims that the branded sportswear market was slowing down and said it would continue with its store opening programme. However, the group revealed a sharp slowdown in same store sales growth to 3 per cent in current trading, compared to more 15 per cent during the year. JJB shares, which have fallen dramatically in the past six weeks, edged 16.5p higher to 537.5p on the sales figures, which were not as bad as the market had expected. Profits rose by 68 per cent to £34m on sales up 56 per cent to £203m.

Carlton invests in Internet

CARLTON COMMUNICATIONS, Michael Green's media group, yesterday announced plans to set up a business specialising in the Internet. Carlton will invest about £20m in Carlton Online, which create new internet businesses as well as managing Carlton's existing web sites. The company has hired Carol Dukes, formerly joint managing director of Emap Online, to run the operation.

Siemens cautions

THE GERMAN electronics giant Siemens warned yesterday that it may not hit its profit target of DM3bn after unveiling what analysts regarded as a poor set of interim figures. Net income for the six months to 31 March rose by 10 per cent to DM1.18bn compared with expectations of DM1.28bn. Siemens also cautioned that profit growth for the remainder of the year would be hit by the downturn in Asia, where new orders fell by 11 per cent in the first half, and the collapse in chip prices. It has also been affected by teething troubles with a new design of gas turbines on order to several electricity generators, including National Power.

Banking for the poor

THE BANK of Scotland said it was looking into providing banking services for the "financially excluded" - people who are denied access to standard bank accounts. The BoS, which yesterday announced a 11 per cent rise in profits to £742m, also tried to play down acquisition hopes. Investment column, page 22.

Housing still recovering

THE HOUSING market is continuing its gentle recovery, according to the Building Societies Association. Net mortgage lending by building societies fell between February and March, from £741m to £650m. But Adrian Coles, the BSA's director general, said: "This is more likely to be a result of month on month fluctuations rather than any worrying trend." Separately, Cbeltenham & Gloucester said the cost of buying a home would peak in December 1998, causing home owners to spend £33 out of every £100 of take-home pay on their mortgage. That compares to £70 per £100 in the late 1980s.

Axa new business up 12pc

AXA SUN LIFE, the top-five insurer formed from last year's merger of Axa Equity & Law and Sun Life, yesterday unveiled a 12 per cent boost to new business. Despite upheavals caused by the merger, new premiums rose to £102.2m from £91.4m on the back of a boom in single premium savings products. However, regular premiums barely rose in the face of stiff competition, up from £47.7m to £49.5m.

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Dividen

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY ANDREW YATES

BoS problem is its price

IT MUST all be a little irritating. Your company's had a good year. You release a strong set of figures, profits up 11 per cent to £72.4m. Even the analysts are surprised how well you've done. And your shares still drop by 5 per cent to 734p, wiping £455m from the value of the company.

But Peter Burt, chief executive of the Bank of Scotland (BoS), took a pretty philosophical view of the 38p slide in the bank's shares yesterday. Mr Burt reckons the shares usually fall on results day - if the bank does poorly. The City is disappointed: if it does well, this usually sparks profit-taking. In any case, it is hard to be too upset given the Bank of Scotland's share price has more than doubled over the last 12 months.

Sir Bruce Patullo, the outgoing chairman, has certainly bowed out on a decent set of numbers. Net operating income grew by 7.5 per cent in the year to February, and its cost-income ratio improved by 2.5 per cent to a commendable 50 per cent.

Its joint venture with Sainsbury's seems to be going swimmingly, with more than 700,000 customers. Even WestBank of Australia - historically BoS's problem child - seems to be settling down a bit. In local currency terms, profits at WestBank grew by 9 per cent, although in sterling, which appreciated substantially against the Australian dollar over the last year, the picture looks a little less bright.

BoS has also managed to avoid some of the difficulties currently troubling many of its competitors. It side-stepped the whole pensions mis-selling debacle because it merely acts as a middle-man for Standard Life, once a major shareholder. Neither did the bank have any significant assets in Asia.

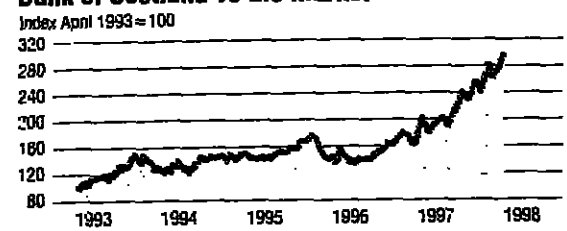
The real problem with the BoS is nothing to do with its core business. The shares are simply too expensive. All

Bank of Scotland: At a glance

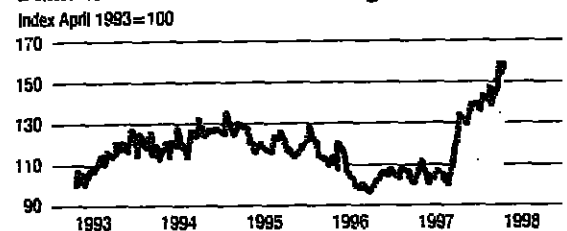
Market value: £878m, share price 734 (-38p)

Five-year record	94	95	96	97	98
Net operating income (£m)	1,145.2	1,298.5	1,437	1,765.7	1,898.5
Pre-tax profits (£m)	268.7	449.7	545	664.1	742
Earnings per share (p)	12.2	22.3	25.8	31.6	38.9
Dividends per share (p)	5.05	5.82	6.85	8.22	9.86

Bank of Scotland vs the market



Bank of Scotland vs the banking sector



banking shares have done well lately, and BoS shares have done better than most.

As with all the banks, the recent share-price surge is being driven by merger fever. speculation that BoS has been keen to play down. Even after yesterday's easing of its share price, the BoS, on a forward price-earnings ratio of 18.5, is still looking a bit expensive.

Avis starts in the fast lane

AVIS Europe is on a roll. In its maiden results since returning to the stock market the group unveiled a 33 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £75.6m. Avis's performance looks even better if the effect of the strong pound is stripped out. In cun, the European currency, profits rose 56 per cent.

The car hire industry grows in a direct correlation to the number of passengers flying into airports and the rise in the

economy. With the UK enjoying a sustained recovery and the airline industry flying high, Avis's market is booming.

So can Avis continue motoring along in the fast lane? With UK economy likely to slow over the next few years, it will find it difficult to match the 18 per cent growth in volumes it achieved last year and analysts believe the group's margin growth is also bound to slow.

However, a lucrative new contract with British Airways is a big plus. And the UK only accounts for a fifth of the business. A recovery in continental Europe will bolster business across the Channel. With European airline passengers forecast to rise by at least 6 per cent a year, Avis looks well placed.

The Asian crisis has temporarily scuppered Avis's plans to exploit the overseas market but its exposure there is limited and so the economic turmoil should have little effect on profits.

Avis's shares have notored since coming to the market a

year ago priced at 125p, although the stock slipped 6p to 227.5p yesterday. Analysts forecast profits of £37m, putting the shares on a prospective p/e ratio of around 20. Its rating is beginning to look a bit racy. But the shares look a solid hold as the group still has plenty of opportunities to exploit the strength of its brand name and expand overseas.

Shake-up for Bentalis

UP UNTIL a few years ago Bentalis was a genteel suburban department store chain, doing nothing much and going nowhere. But that has all changed. A massive shake-up has seen it sell or redevelop most of its property portfolio around its Kingston headquarters, the proceeds of which have been reinvested in its stores and a new distribution centre.

This radical restructuring is beginning to pay off. Profits trebled to more than £11.7m in the year to January, although the figures were flattered by a £6.6m profit from property sales. Even so, retailing profits rose by 28 per cent to £3.4m. A new store in Bristol, which will add 10 per cent to turnover by the end of the year, is on schedule to open in October.

But the closure of one of the two car parks at the flagship store in Kingston last month could stifle its recovery. It has already affected sales at weekends and the group will not know until the end of next week if it will reopen in time to accommodate the all-important Christmas trade.

And the increase in profits masks the fact that underlying sales growth slowed from 11 per cent in the first half to 4.2 per cent in the second half.

That said, the City is looking for profits of around £5.5m, putting the shares, which rose 6p to 143.5p, on a prospective p/e of 16. Trading at a comfortable discount to net assets of 181p, the shares should make a sound investment.

Lloyd's £100m return

By Andrew Yates

DAVID LLOYD, the former tennis star and Davis Cup captain, yesterday served up a new challenge to his old firm by launching a £100m health and fitness chain. The creation of Next Generation Clubs will pit Mr Lloyd head to head with Whitbread, which bought his David Lloyd clubs for £200m in 1995, making the tennis pro a multi-millionaire.

Scottish & Newcastle is joining forces with Mr Lloyd to take on one of its arch-rivals. In its first foray into the health and fitness market the leisure giant has paid £3.5m for a near 15 per cent stake in the new group.

Next Generation Clubs has earmarked £100m to open 20 new clubs at a rate of four a year, including three in the UK and one in Australia. The first sites are due to be opened next summer in Edinburgh and Dundee. Scottish & Newcastle plans to install lodges and entertainment such as bowling alleys and bars alongside the clubs.

Mr Lloyd originally joined Whitbread to oversee the development of his chain but soon became uncomfortable with working as part of a large group and left little more than a year later. He was



Fighting fit: The former tennis star David Lloyd has served up a new rival for Whitbread by launching a £100m health and fitness chain

officially barred from setting up a new health and fitness chain until last October but entrusted Scott, his 23-year-old son, to develop the new company.

The Lloyd family, including David's brother John, another former tennis star, have already pumped £3.5m into the project. Other investors include Billie Jean King, a doyenne of the female tennis circuit.

Mr Lloyd said yesterday he had not lost any enthusiasm for the business: "I am an entrepreneur and I love to work," he said.

Whitbread claimed that it was unconcerned by Mr Lloyd's return to the market.

"The market is growing extremely quickly and there is plenty of room for another competitor," it said.

Tomkins deal sent to MMC

By Clifford German

THE FUTURE of the six Spillers flour mills which Tomkins, the conglomerate, bought from Irish group Kerry for £92m earlier this year was suddenly thrown into doubt yesterday when Nigel Griffiths, the Consumer Affairs minister, referred the deal to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission (MMC).

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) said the acquisition by Tomkins, which gives the group almost 40 per cent of the UK flour market, raised competition concerns about the supply of flour in Great Britain.

The DTI is allowed to refer acquisitions which create or intensify a market share of 25 per cent of the supply in the UK, or involve the takeover of assets exceeding £70m.

Tomkins already owns the bread and flour milling business of RHM, the makers of Mothers Pride bread and Mr Kipling cakes, which accounts for more than 25 per cent of the market. The Spillers business gives it a further 10 per cent.

A spokesman for Tomkins confirmed that it had been aware of the risk of a referral at the time the deal was completed in February. Tomkins shares fell 6.5p to 359p yesterday.

The Monopolies and Mergers Commission is expected to give a ruling on the deal by the end of July. However, a spokesman for Kerry Group made it clear that, as far as Kerry was concerned, the deal is done and it will be up to Tomkins to find new owners if the MMC advises the minister to reject the deal.

The mills were sold to Kerry Group by Dalgety in January this year and then re-sold to Tomkins the following month.

The six Spillers mills at Avonmouth, Birkenhead, Cambridge, Liverpool, Newcastle and Tilbury, together with the bakery distribution business of Fleming Howden in Scotland, employ 650 workers and made a profit of £10.7m on sales of £148m in the year to June 1997. But finding a new buyer could be difficult because Allied Mills, part of Associated British Foods, already has almost 30 per cent of the

UK flour market.

Tomkins had originally tried to buy the Spillers business direct from Dalgety, which insisted on selling its entire food business in a single package, opening the way for Kerry group. Market sources said in February that Tomkins may have had to overpay to secure the Spillers flour mills on their own. At the time they were said to have an asset value of just £44m.

Mr Hutchings has been under pressure from investors to return Tomkins' growing cash pile to shareholders. However, even though Tomkins recently initiated a limited programme of share buy-backs, the group has consistently insisted that it would use its cash for acquisitions.

On the Dublin stock exchange yesterday Kerry Group's shares rose to their seventh successive record high of Ir£11.25, up a further 25p.

Kerry Group intends to retain the bulk of the assets it bought from Dalgety for £335m, including the Homepride flour business to supply its own baking mixes. It also raised fresh capital earlier this year to help reduce its debt.

Pension watchdog accused on top-ups

By Andrew Verity

CFTY regulators were yesterday accused of failing to halt the misleading of pension top-up contracts, despite persistent signs that it could become the next big public scandal.

Bacon & Woodrow, the leading authority on the contracts, said it had evidence of employees paying large commissions to life insurers for selling schemes for additional voluntary contributions (AVCs), a method of topping up employers' schemes.

The evidence indicates that sales people were failing properly to tell customers they could get the same scheme within their own company without paying any commission. That would save each customer hundreds of pounds.

Bacon & Woodrow said customers were still being wrongly advised to buy top-ups from outside sales people, when the schemes are known as free-standing AVCs. That leads them to pay unnecessary commissions which can eat up half of all savings in the first two years.

Andy Cox, an AVC expert at the consultancy, said "The PIA claimed there was no evidence of misleading following a review in 1996, but did feel the need to issue guidance on the selling of free-standing AVC contracts."

Despite this, evidence from some of our clients suggests that some contracts are still being sold without the member being made fully aware of the in-scheme options."

In a recent survey by Bacon & Woodrow, a quarter of pension schemes had members who had bought top-up contracts from outside and paid commission. That was despite the fact that the same contract, with the same provider, was commission-free within the company.

Many in the industry privately fear regulators are reluctant to investigate because of the effort required. The regulator is still heavily involved in the mammoth review of personal pension mis-selling, where employees were persuaded to opt out of employer schemes.

The PIA said it had not uncovered any evidence of mis-selling. "We are happy that the monitoring is sufficiently thorough to have identified any serious problem," a spokeswoman said.

Outlook, page 21

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Why knowledge is the new engine of economic growth



DIANE COYLE
ON THE
CHALLENGES
FACING THE
WEIGHTLESS
ECONOMY

THE ECONOMY has changed, many commentators seem to agree. The Americans like to call it the "new paradigm", others talk about the information or knowledge-based economy, while I prefer to describe it as weightlessness, to put the emphasis on the growing share of intangible value in economic output.

Whatever your preference, and with all the appropriate cautions about the tendency in human nature to declare a miracle at the top of every business cycle, it is clear there is broad agreement that what drives the engine of growth and wealth creation has changed.

However, there is far less consensus about how it has changed and what the implications might be. For example, what kinds of industrial restructuring might we expect? And are insecurity and inequality the tolls that have to be paid to enter this new growth path? In a talk delivered to the Social Market Foundation earlier this week, Professor Danny Quah of the London School of Economics set out some of the basic economic issues facing the weightless world.

Drawing on the work of the Nobel Laureate Kenneth Arrow, a pioneer of the economics of information, Professor Quah argued that there are three properties which characterise our new world. The weightless economy consists of activities, products and services where what people are willing to pay for is intangible. It might be a derivatives trade or insurance policy, a piece of genetic code, a movie or recording, a brand image or attractive design, or a piece of software. What it is not is material stuff. So the computer industry is the obvious manifestation, but so is a pair of Gucci sandals whose buyer is paying for what they do for her image and confidence rather than something to protect her feet.

One property shared by all these bits of economic value is that they are "infinitely expandable". This simply means that my use of the piece of knowl-

edge does not prevent others from using it. Once a piece of software code has been created, any number of people can consume it without detracting from the ability of others to do so at the same time. A related property is inappropriability. Once invented or thought up, an idea cannot be appropriated. It is common human property.

This is why intellectual property rights and patents have always been so controversial and are increasingly so. It is because they are attempts to defend the indefensible. International diplomats and lawyers will fight their hardest to protect recordings from Chinese pirates or a brand name from low-cost manufacturers in cheap labour countries. But, speaking in terms of the economics rather than the law, once an idea, invention or creative inspiration is out there in public, it is there. It is only the first act of creation that really adds to economic welfare.

"Reinventing the wheel gets no points for improving the lot of humanity," as Professor Quah put it. These basic properties of the advanced economies have some subtle implications. If the rewards from weightless economic activity are not appropriate in the way that the rewards from making machine tools are, then exactly who is going to prosper?

On the face of it, you would think anybody can benefit from the value of ideas if those ideas cannot be fully protected. Yet, clearly, the most weightless industries generate the most fabulously wealthy individuals, whether the top pop stars or Bill Gates. Of the 20 wealthiest Americans in the latest US rich list, three had got there through computer software, another three were in other bits of the computer industry and two were media magnates.

Part of the explanation lies in the "superstar" nature of industries where there are increasing returns to scale. For many weightless activities, from pop music to software, the

natural marketplace is global and the marginal cost of expanding is virtually zero. If you can get in first and corner the market, by establishing the best-known brand, or by exploiting the kind of network externalities that have aided Microsoft (if almost everybody already uses Windows, the attractiveness of that software to new users is increased), you are guaranteed colossal status.

This is the kind of argument on which the US Justice Department is basing its current case against Microsoft, on the grounds that the company has started to enhance its semi-natural monopoly by foul means as well as fair. But Professor Quah has some sympathy for Mr Gates' defence, which is that he has only a brief opportunity to profit from his first-come status because of all the potential future Microsofts scrambling to follow him.

After all, the Microsofts and Intels spend small fortunes on R&D and buying up other start-ups because they need a constant supply of fresh and creative ideas. Professor Quah points to the near death and last-minute resuscitation of IBM - although he forgets to mention the part played in its downfall in the mid-1980s by an anti-trust case brought by the Justice Department.

Even so, it is the case that being a weightless monopolist is not like being a monopoly aircraft manufacturer. There is plenty of opportunity for new challengers to enter the market because start-up costs are low and the ultimate barrier between any of us and a billion-dollar fortune is a telephone line, an idea and hard work. What's more, the classic argument in favour of patents and the protection of intellectual property applies in spades these days: future innovators will be discouraged from bothering at all unless they see that the first person to have an idea gets some protection for it.

A further implication of the underlying economics is that, like it or not, marketing and advertising are absolutely crucial

to economic growth. No matter that we are all thoroughly fed-up with Cool Britannia by now, the image actually is going to make a difference to our future prosperity. It is all about persuading consumers world-wide that they want to spend their money on the - weightless - value that we are creating.

It is easy to dismiss this as hype. But Professor Quah presents some figures that should give the sceptics pause for thought. In the first half of this century - a pretty unexciting time in terms of new technologies - technological progress which boosted the productivity of labour and capital accounted for nine-tenths of economic growth in the industrial economies.

When the same exercise in growth accounting is applied to the late 20th century, when the real price of computer power has fallen 30 per cent a year in real terms for two decades, it is a fair bet that technology will have accounted for almost all of the growth.

Between 1992 and 1997 the information technology industries alone, just one corner of the weightless economy, contributed more than a quarter of America's economic growth. By the end of that period, the software and computer service industries were employing 1.2 million people on an average salary of \$56,000 a year, double the private sector average. If this is the potential result, it is worth putting up with the marketing hype.

None of this is assured, however. As the presentation pointed out, medieval China made huge technological advances, but restrictive government policies preventing their dissemination meant that by the 19th century China lagged far behind the West economically. The British government, like the US administration, is more than willing to embrace weightlessness in theory. But they have to stick to it in practice too, and that might not be so easy.

Professor Quah's web page: <http://econ.lse.ac.uk/staff/dquah/>

PEOPLE & BUSINESS

JOHN WILLCOCK



THERE WAS much amusement in the Square Mile yesterday as Johnny Townsend stepped down as chairman of Yorkshire engineering company Severfield-Reeve after just a single month in the post. It is considered to be one of the briefest tenures in City history.

Mr Townsend, one of the City's old school bankers and one of its best known bon vivants, is vice-chairman of Hoare Govett corporate finance. Hoare Govett and ABN Amro just happen to be the company's broker and financial adviser respectively. This did not go down too well with the Association of British Insurers, which felt there was just a hint of conflict of interest. "Er, well, yes," a spokesman said. "Johnny has done a great job for the company and they felt he would make an excellent chairman. Sadly the ABI did not agree." Mr Townsend is being replaced by Peter Levine.

IT'S NOT immediately clear what the chief executive of a nuclear waste company could bring to the FSA, the government's spanking-new financial services regulator. However, I'm assured that Michael Folger, the new director of investment business at the FSA, is more than qualified for the job. Mr Folger, formerly chief executive of UK Nirex, was once a senior vice president at Dean Witter Reynolds, the brokerage. He also started out his career at HM Treasury.

In a quite unconnected affair it was, of course, the First Lord of the Treasury, one Tony Blair, who yesterday revealed to have accepted four kilograms of highly volatile nuclear waste from the former Soviet republic of Georgia. If the FSA ever has a tonne of uranium it needs to get rid of in a hurry, it'll now know where to turn.

ANDREW KIMBER, a financial markets analyst at UBS, is making a name for himself with one of his extra-curricular activities - horse-racing. The 32-year-old boy wonder, who has a PhD in theoretical physics, is a keen amateur jockey and owns two horses, Shahik and Remei, which he keeps stabled in Buckinghamshire.

Mr Kimber's talents have been spotted by *Sporting Life's* gossip column, which has identified him as an up and comer. The paper says that when not number-crunching at his desk, Mr Kimber can be found at a City gym working off the pounds so he can make his weights. His next race is on Shahik at Southwell in Nottinghamshire next Monday. How does he find the time?

SPEAKING OF UBS, it's hard to believe there are any former UBS-ers still without a job, given the seemingly never-ending series of hiring announcements spewing from the press offices of rival investment banks. However, news from Salomon Smith Barney confirms there are at least a few casualties of the UBS/SBC merger still doing rounds at the headhunters. Salomon has hired 11 ex-UBS equity staff - five in its Singapore office and six in Malaysia.

HAVING taken over the Seven-11 chain of convenience stores last year, Budgens has now completed the re-branding of the portfolio under the name B2. But I can reveal that this name was only arrived at after several other possibilities were rejected by John von Spreckelsen, Budgens' chief executive.

One early candidate for the name was John Budgens, who founded the supermarket group 125 years ago. This was ruled out, presumably on the grounds of being too boring. Also considered was Twenty-Four-Seven, a reference to the stores being open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. That too was shelved. However, the company claims it was nothing to do with the release of a movie of the same name about boxing and starring Bob Hoskins.

KPMG may have been jilted at the altar in its efforts to merge with Ernst & Young but at least it has succeeded in getting a senior partner, Mike Rake, 50, will be in charge of running the egos of the accountancy firm's 9,000 UK staff, it was announced yesterday.

Mr Rake has a good reason to view with nostalgic eyes the position of his opposite number at E&Y, Nick Land, and wonder what became of their cosy marriage. The Rake began his career in the early 1970s at a large London firm called Turquand Barton & Mayhew, which was soon gobbled up by Ernst & Young. Among the young Turks at E&Y was an ambitious young man named Nick Land. After working close to Mr Land, Mr Rake jumped ship. Could they still be best of friends? Colin Sharman, KPMG's underpaid incumbent, will stay on, concentrating on the firm's international business.

PROOF, if proof were needed, that Tony Blair is getting too cosy with Microsoft's Bill Gates. Mr Blair is due to launch Number 10's new Internet website on 29 April with a live on-line interview.

However, if you wish to register to pose a question to our beloved PM, you will have to have Microsoft's NetShow plugged in to watch it. So if your system uses Netscape - no Tony, and no Cool Britannia. On the other hand, perhaps that's not so bad.

Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Sterling	1 month	3 months	Dollar	1 month	3 months	D-Mark
UK	10000			0.5924	0.5863	0.6000	0.3334
Australia	2.5697	2.5664	2.5607	1.5350	1.5354	1.5363	0.8568
Canada	2.0595	2.0598	2.0598	1.2492	1.2499	1.2499	0.7095
Denmark	6.1895	6.1894	6.1832	3.6875	3.6871	3.6796	2.0539
Finland	1.9624	1.9619	1.9544	1.0401	1.0355	1.0380	0.6277
France	6.5695	6.5684	6.5641	5.4392	5.4356	5.4301	3.0339
Germany	2.0595	2.0598	2.0598	1.2492	1.2499	1.2499	0.7095
Greece	3.4095	3.4095	3.4095	1.7935	1.7935	1.7935	1.0000
Hong Kong	7.7595	7.7595	7.7595	3.6875	3.6871	3.6796	2.0539
Ireland	1.9624	1.9619	1.9544	1.0401	1.0355	1.0380	0.6277
Italy	2.0595	2.0598	2.0598	1.2492	1.2499	1.2499	0.7095
Japan	1.9624	1.9619	1.9544	1.0401	1.0355	1.0380	0.6277
South Africa	6.5695	6.5684	6.5641	5.4392	5.4356	5.4301	3.0339
Spain	2.0595	2.0598	2.0598	1.2492	1.2499	1.2499	0.7095
Sweden	6.5695	6.5684	6.5641	5.4392	5.4356	5.4301	3.0339
Switzerland	2.0595	2.0598	2.0598	1.2492	1.2499	1.2499	0.7095
US	1.9624	1.9619	1.9544	1.0401	1.0355	1.0380	0.6277

Other Spot Rates

Country	Sterling	Dollar	Country	Sterling	Dollar
Argentina	1.9624	1.9619	Oman	0.5444	0.5444
Brazil	1.9624	1.9619	Philippines	6.5695	6.5684
China	6.5695	6.5684	Poland	5.4392	5.4356
Czech Rep	5.4392	5.4356	Romania	6.5695	6.5684
Egypt	5.4392	5.4356	Saudi Arabia	6.5695	6.5684
France	6.5695	6.5684	South Korea	2.0595	2.0598
Germany	2.0595	2.0598	Taiwan	5.4392	5.4356
Greece	3.4095	3.4095	Thailand	3.6875	3.6871
Hong Kong	7.7595	7.7595	Turkey	4.0500	4.0500
India	6.5695	6.5684	UAE	6.5695	6.5684
Indonesia	1.9624	1.9619			
Israel	0.5444	0.5444			
Italy	2.0595	2.0598			
Japan	1.9624	1.9619			
Korea	2.0595	2.0598			
Malaysia	6.5695	6.5684			
Mexico	1.9624	1.9619			
Netherlands	2.0595	2.0598			
Norway	6.5695	6.5684			
Portugal	5.4392	5.4356			
Romania	6.5695	6.5684			
Saudi Arabia	6.5695	6.5684			
South Africa	6.5695	6.5684			
South Korea	2.0595	2.0598			
Spain	2.0595	2.0598			
Sweden	6.5695	6.5684			
Switzerland	2.0595	2.0598			
Taiwan	5.4392	5.4356			
Thailand	3.6875	3.6871			
Turkey	4.0500	4.0500			
UAE	6.5695	6.5684			
US	1.9624	1.9619			

Interest Rates

UK		Germany		US		Japan	
Base	7.25%	Discount	2.50%	Prime	8.50%	Discount	0.50%
France	Discount	4.50%	Discount	Discount	8.00%	Belgium	5.00%
Intervention	3.30%	Canada		Fed Funds	5.65%	Discount	2.75%
Italy		Prime	5.50%	Spain		Central	3.00%
Discount	5.00%	Denmark		Rep Repo	4.50%	Netherlands	1.00%
Netherlands	Discount	Denmark		Sweden		Switzerland	1.30%
Spain	3.30%	Discount	3.50%	Repo(Ave)	4.35%	Lombard	3.33%

Bond Yields								
Country	3 mth	chg	1 yr	chg	5 yr	chg	10 yr	chg
Australia	4.85	-0.01	4.75	-0.08	4.98	-0.04	5.40	-0.03
Belgium	3.71	-0.02	3.90	-0.05	4.23	-0.03	4.58	0.00
Canada	4.69	0.02	5.02	0.02	4.99	0.00	5.21	0.01
France	4.92	-0.02	4.36	-0.07	4.20	-0.01	4.91	-0.01
Germany	3.00	0.00	3.72	-0.04	4.72	-0.04	4.81	-0.01
Japan	3.66	0.00	3.94	0.00	4.30	-0.04	4.80	-0.01
Netherlands	5.05	-0.02	4.57	-0.03	4.56	-0.02	4.98	0.01
Sweden	5.50	-0.01	0.50	-0.01	0.56	-0.01	1.11	-0.01
Switzerland	3.60	-0.02	3.84	0.00	4.20	-0.02	4.57	0.00
UK	4.89	-0.01	4.75	-0.01	4.78	-0.02	5.08	-0.01
NZ	4.53	0.06	4.72	0.09	4.78	-0.01	4.95	0.02
Stank	1.38	-0.06	1.75	0.03	1.94	-0.01	2.40	0.04
US	7.01	0.00	7.50	-0.00	6.70	-0.02	6.12	0.02
Yield	4.89	0.00	5.00	0.00	5.00	0.00	5.65	0.00

International football: England achieve emphatic victory but fail to dispel doubts about defensive and midfield qualities

Shearer tears open Portugal's gifts

By Glenn Moore
at Wembley

England 3
Portugal 0

EILEEN DREWERY can expect a rush of international managers at her door this morning after Glenn Hoddle's England gained a bizarrely comfortable win at Wembley last night.

Outplayed in midfield for much of the game by the technically gifted Portuguese, England secured their biggest win over serious opposition under Hoddle through the critical strengths of excellent finishing and fine goalkeeping.

Alan Shearer scored twice and Teddy Sheringham once as England showed an attacking edge that, if repeated in June, could take them a long way.

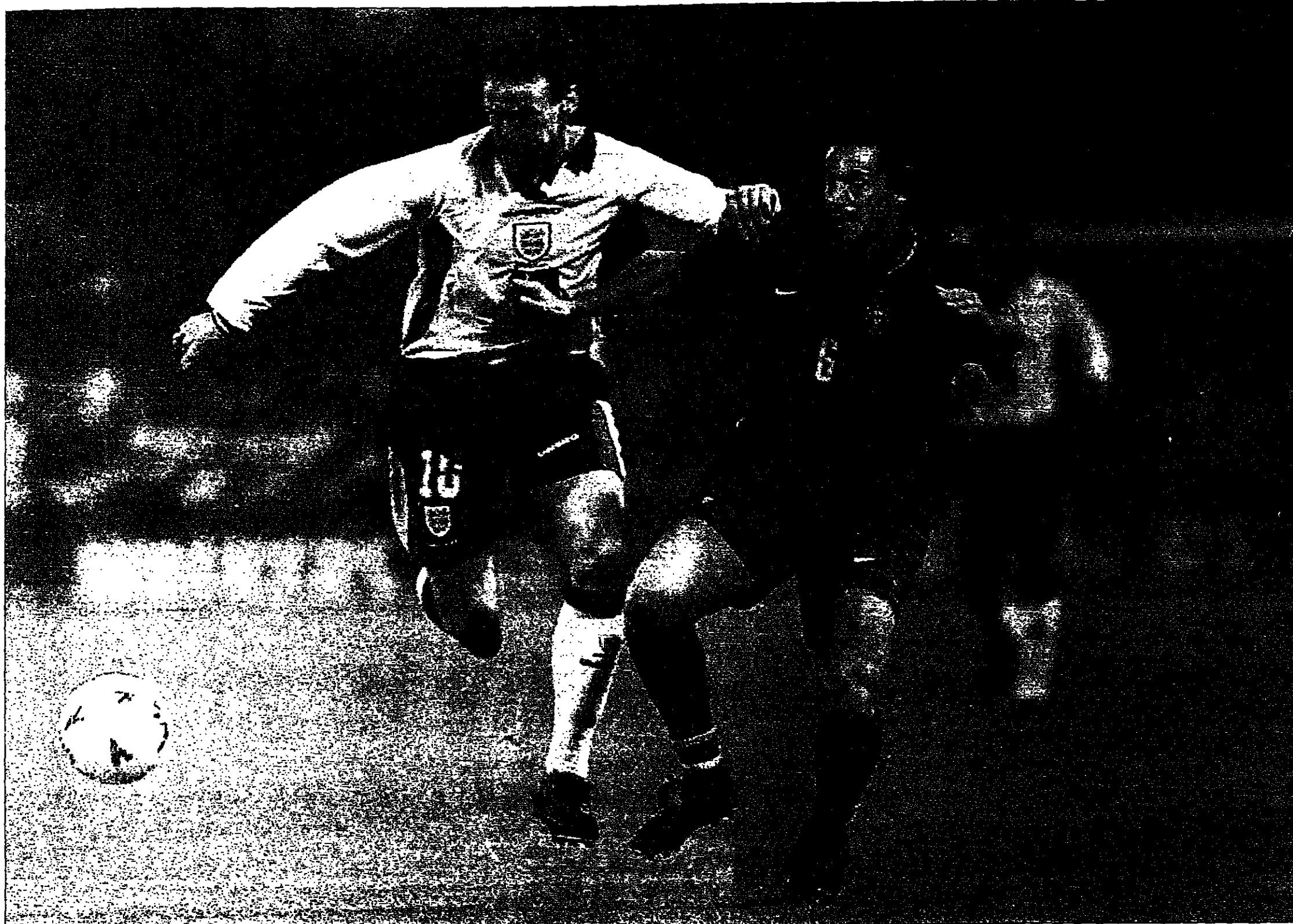
With Portugal fielding eight of the squad that made the quarter-finals of Euro '96 and England, (who had seven Euro '96 veterans) playing almost a first-choice team, the match had more credibility than most friendlies.

The only leading player missing for England was Paul Gascoigne whose injuries, as expected, had defied both mainstream and alternative medical cures. Paul Scholes was handed the often onerous responsibility of filling his role behind the familiar front pairing of Sheringham and Shearer.

The England SAS, as opposed to the former Blackburn one (Sutton and Shearer) which is unlikely to be seen at this level, was quickly into action with Sheringham heading over from Shearer's cross in the second minute. Two minutes later they traded places and England were ahead. Sheringham received a throw-in from Graeme Le Saux on the left and laid it back off to Le Saux, whose cross was deftly headed in by Shearer. It was a clinical finish even if Shearer's task was made easier by neither Manuel Dimas or Roberto Beto making a challenge.

Wembley, which had earlier accorded the late Lord Howell as good a minute's silence as anyone who was both a referee and politician is ever likely to get, cheered England's goal with considerably more enthusiasm than they had greeted the new World Cup song.

Six minutes later, however, they were forced into the rare position of applauding the opposition after an audacious move almost brought Portugal level. Luis Figo, the former Celtic hero, then dinkily chipped David Seaman from 15 yards. The ball just drifted wide but,



England's Teddy Sheringham (left) contests possession with Paulo Sousa, of Portugal, during last night's international at Wembley

Photograph: Justin Herbert/Allsport

as Ian Wright's standing ovation in the Royal Box illustrated, it deserved a goal.

Cadete had already gone close and, as Jose Calado tested Seaman and Tony Adams was forced to make a last-ditch clearance from Joao Pinto, it became evident that Portugal, like Chile two months ago, were here to make a game of it.

The visitors went on to dominate the half with Seaman having to deal with a number of 20-yard shots and several quick interchanges were only halted at the edge of the box. So pressed back were England that 3-5-2 quickly became 4-2-2

with Le Saux occupied by the busy Figo.

The one benefit of Portugal's control of possession was that England could show what a good counter-attacking team they are. After 26 minutes Shearer rolled a pass into the path of Le Saux whose shot was turned away for a corner by Victor Baia. The Barcelona reserve goalkeeper was stretched again 11 minutes later as Shearer and Sheringham set up David Beckham, whose left-foot shot was tipped over the bar.

Paul Ince had a weaker shot saved but it was Seaman who ended the half buster, making

a sharp save low to his left after Joao Pinto had seized on a loose ball in the box.

At half-time England brought on Paul Merson for Beckham - maybe he had a date to see his fiancée, Victoria, playing with the Spice Girls in the adjacent Wembley Arena. Before he had a chance to make an impact Manuel Diaz Vega, the referee, made an unexpected intervention on England's behalf. Less than a minute had gone when an attempted through ball by Ince took a large deflection off the Spaniard and fell for Sheringham. His finish was pitiless.

Campbell made a good challenge on Joao Pinto as Portugal continued to struggle to find a finish to match their approach play. Cadete, the most direct of their clever forwards, forced a near post save from Seaman just after the hour but, after 65 minutes, Shearer showed them what they were missing.

Another quick break found Batty, who had earlier been booked, bursting through the inside-left channel. His first time pass found Shearer unmarked in the centre and, from 20 yards, he thrashed the ball past Vitor Baia.

With 13 minutes left Hoddle brought on Owen to a rousing cheer and he nearly scored within seconds, closing down Beto's clearance, racing clear and shooting into the side netting. He could easily have scored when released by Shearer a few minutes later but the referee inexplicably stopped play to dismiss Capucho rather than wait for a break. As Portugal's discipline went Owen should have had a penalty went brought down by Vitor Baia, but the referee not only denied that but also harshly disallowed a headed goal by Adams for pushing. Seaman also proved his

worth with more fine saves from Fernando Couto, twice, and Oceano as England ended with a clean sheet and their first victory over Portugal since 1969.

ENGLAND 3-0-1-2: Seaman (Aston); G Neville (Manchester United); Adams (Arsenal); Campbell (Tottenham Hotspur); Beckham (Manchester United); Ince (Liverpool); Batty (Newcastle United); Le Saux (Chelsea); Scholes (Manchester United); Sheringham (Manchester United); Shearer (Newcastle)

United, substitute Merson (Manchester United) for Beckham, h.t. Owen (Liverpool) for Sheringham 77.
PORTUGAL 4-2-2-1: Vitor Baia (Barcelona); Abel Xavier (Real Madrid); Fernando Couto (Barcelona); Beto (Sporting Lisbon); Dimas (Lorient); Celso (Bristol); Paulo Sousa (Internacional); Paulo Bento (Porto); Figo (Barcelona); Joao Pinto (Braga); Cadete (Celta); Substitutes: Beto (Sporting Lisbon) for Dimas, 55; Capucho (Porto) for Joao Pinto, 68; Oceano (Sporting Lisbon) for Paulo Sousa, 75; Reserves: M. Diaz Vega (Sporting).
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THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD
No. 3592, Thursday 23 April By Phil Wednesday's solution

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ACROSS
1 Comfortable place for a retired woman? (3,2,5)
6 Illegal activity soundly curtailed (4)
10 Graduate after drink and some dancing? (5)
11 Alien thing, real - but not a creature from outer space! (9)
12 Damage horse, cutting tail (3)
13 Opera extracts from Beethoven or Martino (5)
14 Translation of Rilke made to appear ethereal? (9)
15 Receives subjects and, with wisdom, understands (4,3,7)
18 Just what you need! (4,10)
22 Rather cowardly? How silly to be perturbed about end of battle (9)
24 Mad character, halfheartedly becomes one to show animosity (5)

DOWN
25 Dread turning over in the water? (5)
26 One has no rubbish, getting edition with explanatory comments (9)
27 Say the point is to return from a drunken spree (5)
28 Island - it's seen on the horizon, we hear (4)
29 Sunbanned salesman carrying river fish (5,5)
1 Prohibition affecting elderly? It does for several years! (8)
2 Fed up about me coming up with a black mark (7)
3 Evidence of a poor shave can make you go mad (4,2,3,5)
4 Rod's verse is rewritten to appear too finely arrayed (9)
5 Bizarre end to life, being thrown into lake (5)
7 Closing off (by the sound of it) part of room (7)
8 Painter carrying good drawing material? (6)
9 That bet is arranged after title-holder shows eagerness (6,2,3,3)
16 Deceptive with dog finding item in handbag? (3,6)
17 Hungry to translate contents of rune site (8)
18 Crafty netplay in abundance (7)
20 Vivaldi, perhaps, showing a new fashion in orchestration, initially (7)
21 How one could gain admission to type of surgery? (2,4)
23 Bury artist's departed father? (5)

Captain points way to success in France

By Clive White

FOR a couple of moments last night it was like the good old days at Ewood Park as Alan Shearer and Graeme Le Saux combined to devastating effect. England will need to revive all that team work - and some more - if they are to enjoy success in the World Cup finals this summer.

In the early stages of last night's match at Wembley the only moment which brought Ian Wright jumping to his feet in the VIP box in enthusiastic appreciation was a non-scoring move by Portugal rather than anything the Blackburn old boys could produce: a delectable 1-2 after 11 minutes involving Figo and Jorge Cadete.

Shearer was making only his second international start in 10 months following those debilitating pre-season injuries. It took him only four minutes to register his 17th goal for his country in 38 appearances - a strike rate of which any forward in the world would be proud - even if the Portuguese marking left something to be desired.

Coming only a couple of minutes after an abject header by Teddy Sheringham, Shearer's goal demonstrated to his fellow striker the standards which are required at the highest level.

Full fitness and razor sharpness still elude him, which perhaps is only to be expected given the length of his inactivity. It was noticeable in a recent League game against Barnsley that on one occasion he did not even possess the necessary puff to keep up with Temur Keisbaia in an obvious breakaway chance. Fifty-four days ought to be enough to blow away the remaining cobwebs before he gets down to the real business.

The problem yesterday, his occasional assistance from Le Saux apart, was a lack of support and service rather than too much of it. How he must have missed the penetration of Paul Gascoigne's passing, England's midfield in the first half was a curious no-man's land devoid of both creativity and defensive excellence.

It was a scoreline that defied explanation even before Sheringham added a fortuitous second

goal. But Shearer's personal second was truly a joy to behold. He has not scored many goals from open play this season - in fact just one - and the manner in which he volleyed home David Batty's lob pass was just like the Shearer of old, meatily struck and a certain winner from the moment it left his right foot. Naturally, Le Saux instigated the move.

One could only surmise what the outcome might have been had Portugal been blessed with a Shearer in their front line. Glenn Hoddle, though, despite his faith in Sheringham's innate international qualities, may have to think again about the ideal foil for England's star forward for France 98.

There was little doubt about where the sympathy of the Wembley crowd lay, judging by the noisy reception they gave Michael Owen when he replaced Sheringham with 13 minutes remaining. It did not take the Liverpool youngster a moment to underline his international credentials when he made a thrilling run which was lacking only in the final execution.

SAINT
GEORGE'S
DAY.
MAKE
A KNIGHT
OF IT.

CHARLES WELLS FAMILY BREWERY, BEDFORD. EST. 1876
BREWING FOR ENGLAND

هكنا من الشرح